Tales of two cities

Comparing culture and social relations in Liverpool and Marseilles, two ‘European Capitals of Culture’

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

The University of Manchester
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Claire Bullen

Tales of Two Cities: Comparing culture and social relations in Liverpool and Marseilles, two ‘European Capitals of Culture’

Since introduced in 1985, the European Capital of Culture often figures as the most ‘successful’ European Union cultural policies. It is also regularly evoked as representative of contemporary strategies of culturally-inflected urban development. That is, where city leaderships look to ‘culture’ as a means to make their cities more competitive, and to manage urban populations. This dissertation uses this European cultural policy as an entry point through which to compare how culturally-inflected urban development has shaped understandings, representations and experiences of culture and social relations in two European cities: Liverpool, European Capital of Culture in 2008, and Marseilles, titleholder in 2013. The central question addressed here is whether it is possible to observe similar opportunities and barriers for urban dwellers of diverse backgrounds living in impoverished urban areas to participate in city and cultural-making processes.

The two cities have comparative value because of similarities they share within multi-scalar hierarchies of power. Historically, both were significant global ports of empire; both have frequently been associated with large working class populations that are often racialised or criminalised; both are regularly depicted as ‘cities of crisis’ or ‘uncultured places’. The two urban localities are situated relatively low down on political and economic inter-urban league tables. Since the 1980s, they have become the sites of major market-led urban restructuring processes, exacerbated in the context of recent austerity policies. There are also significant variations; in national and local frameworks of urban governance, differing relations with ‘Europe’ and distinctive histories of race and class. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with a range of urban actors (urban dwellers in impoverished neighbourhoods, cultural policy workers and urban decision-makers) between 2004 and 2014, I explore how understandings and experiences of culture and social relations were differentially reconfigured in relation to this European cultural policy initiative.

My findings point to similarities in the ways in which cultural policy materialised in these two places historically understood as lacking ‘cultural distinction.’ Dominant understandings of culture value were defined in relation to hierarchies of value constructed in social networks that extending beyond the city (the nation state, Europe, the world). In both, cultural policy-making was closely linked to economic growth policies. As elsewhere in the world, these trends resulted in growing professionalisation of the arts, gentrification of the city centre and increasing marginalisation of local cultural workers and urban dwellers living in impoverished areas, in processes inflected by gender, race and class. The study also draws out some of the complexities and unexpected outcomes of culturally-inflected urban policies. Nuancing studies on cultural diversity and gentrification, it offers an ethnographically sensitive yet critical reading of how such culturally-inflected urban development materialises in particular locations, contributing to broader understandings about the production of social difference and competing understandings of cultural value in cities, in unequal relations of power.
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Preface

This thesis emerged out of my experiences living and working in Liverpool. When I first arrived in Liverpool in 2002, the city had been the subject of intense re-branding for over a decade. The city’s name was still tainted by the highly-mediatised ‘race’ riots that had made international headlines in 1981, and was associated with protracted labour disputes, poverty and criminality. Yet my understanding of the city was mediated by stories of a regenerated waterfront redevelopment prefiguring an urban ‘renaissance’ that were appearing with increasing regularity in national Sunday supplements. It was over a number of years, firstly as a Masters student studying European Union Politics at the University of Liverpool, then as a volunteer in a Citizens Advice Bureau, followed by four years experience working for an urban development agency, a stint as a self-employed director of two social enterprises and finally as a doctoral student at the University of Manchester, that I gained a more nuanced sense of the complex way in which ‘difference’ (in terms of geography, class, race and ethnicity) were constructed and performed in this city.

I arrived in Marseilles in 2010 to carry out ten months’ doctoral fieldwork for this comparative study, but relationships made in the field endured. Since mid-2012 I move between an impoverished, racialised quartier in Marseilles, a bourgeois village situated on the outskirts of the neighbouring city of Aix-en-Provence, and my family home in rural England, passing through Paris and London in my travels. I participate in social and cultural networks that stretch within and between these social spaces. These distinctive vantage points have helped develop my thinking about understandings and experiences of difference and inequality in Marseilles and Liverpool. I draw on all the above in what follows.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would never have been possible without the inspiration and support of an enormous number of people. Over the last six years and more, I have benefited from the generosity and openness of many people in Liverpool and Marseilles, who gave me time and insights, shared their views on their city, culture and social relations, offered me food and hospitality, and opened up their social and cultural networks to me. For
reasons of anonymity and space, I cannot list everybody here, but I owe all a debt of
gratitude. I also want to acknowledge and thank all who agreed to give interviews.

It has been an amazing privilege to develop my thinking with Nina Glick Schiller and
Sarah Green as supervisors. They have been unstinting in sharing their ideas, and their
time. Without their kindness and support, it is unlikely that I would have made it to the
end. I am also grateful to Alan Harding and Gillian Evans who, at different times,
supported the development of this project and helped me think about useful questions to
ask. Mark Elliot has been very helpful with his coaching and encouragement in the final
stages of the writing up.

I have gained much from discussions in the research seminars and reading groups over
the years. I remember with particular pleasure the reading group of the Research
Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures (RICC) at the University of Manchester when I first
began my thesis. I sat in on a number of rich discussions at the L'Institut d'ethnologie
méditerranéenne, européenne et comparative (IDEMEC) at the Maison
méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme (MMSH) in Aix-en-Provence, as well as in
seminars organised by the Centre Norbert Elias, in La Vieille Charité in Marseilles.
Two associations in Marseilles need particular mention for creating a valuable space to
think about, discuss and militate against policies of urban transformation and
gentrification in Marseilles: Un Centre Ville Pour Tous and Pensons Le Matin.

Over the years many friends and family members have engaged me in lively debates or
read different versions of the text, helping me hone my ideas and improve the structure
of my argument. I particularly want to thank Anya Früh, Franck Lamiot, Heather and
Geoff Bullen for their contributions over the last few months. Cathy Librini provided
invaluable help in efficiently correcting my French transcriptions. My mother has
provided warm and unquestioning support throughout the whole process and her
proofreading skills at this last stage have been priceless.

I take full responsibility for any errors of fact, omission or interpretation.

This thesis is dedicated to my father.
Introduction: on comparing the cultures of cities

Setting the scene

In May 2012, I attended a conference organised by the association Marseilles Provence 2013, the body responsible for organising that city’s European Capital of Culture event. It was one of a number of conferences, seminars and debates that I had attended during the course of this research during which the subject of the European Capital of Culture was discussed, including in Brussels, Lyons and Liverpool. As might be expected, this conference took place in Marseilles.¹

The Marseilles conference comprised of two different ‘acts’. The first was officially open to the public. In a university auditorium, in front of an audience of professionals involved in European capital of culture programmes, as well as journalists, students and ‘cultural workers’² from Marseilles, a representative from the Directorate-General of Education and Culture (DG CG) at the European Commission gave an outline of the European Capital of Culture project since its introduction in 1985. Presented in English, she offered a well-versed account of the way this policy had evolved over time. She explained how initially this cultural project had been conceived as a means to give a “human face” to the developing European Economic Community, promoting a shared “European culture”. The speaker then described a growing focus on the city and questions of social inclusion that had occurred since the selection of the Scottish (UK) city of Glasgow in 1990. Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture programme in 2008 was cited as an example of a city that had paid particular attention to the social dimension.

The contribution by the representative from the European Commission was followed by presentations from speakers involved in two previous European Capitals of Culture (Glasgow, Scotland and Linz, Austria), and two cities that were due to host the title the following year (Kosice, Slovakia and Marseilles, France). The brief for the presenters

¹ At the time I was carrying out participation observation in the association Marseilles Provence 2013 (association MP2013). I was invited by the person responsible for European funding and evaluation.
² I use the term cultural worker in the broadest sense, to understand people involved in the field on cultural production at some level, including artists, arts and cultural managers, people involved in the distribution and interpretation of cultural goods (see Primorac 2005). There is no assumption that people in the field used and interpreted this term in such a way.
was to explain why urban decision-makers had decided to compete for this title, how
they had involved their citizens and their identified ‘European’ dimension. Despite
distinctive economic and socio-cultural histories of the different cities, the audience
heard very similar narratives about how this European cultural project had been used: to
alter the image of the respective cities, to support particular forms of creative production
and to improve urban governance.

Time had been allocated for questions from the floor. Two people directed critical
questions in French to the French-speaking director of the association MP2013,
querying the way in which the programme had been implemented in Marseilles.³
Notwithstanding this ‘local’ dissatisfaction (which would not have been apparent to the
non-French speaking members of the audience), nobody in the room challenged the
orthodoxy of the value of ‘culture’ as an urban development tool. At the end of the
session, I asked my colleague if she had learned anything new. She sighed, and said:
“they always say the same thing”.

***

“They always say the same thing…”

This conference introduces some central concerns of this thesis. In the first instance, it
illustrates how urban policy-makers across the EU are using a similar language to talk
about culture as a means to rebrand the city, transform the economy, attract tourists and
capital and to manage social relations; despite different national and local frameworks
for dealing with culture and social relations. The policies discussed at the conference
thus embody what is described as a ‘cultural turn’ in urban development that has
expanded exponentially since the 1970s (Harvey 1989; Helie 2009; Mayer 2103; Peck
2005).

The convergence in language used by such urban elites learned and transmitted via
networks of policy-makers could be read as reflecting a growing homogenisation of
culture values across Europe and the spread of a global hierarchy of values disseminated
via increasingly transnational processes of urban policymaking (Herzfeld 2004). Yet

³ Questions included criticism about the secretive way in which the project was being run and the absence
of cultural diversity in the final programming. These are central themes to my thesis. I raise them here
and explore them later.
while my colleague felt that *the same thing* was repeated at such publicly-staged events, both she and I were well aware that this was not the case back in the offices of the association Marseilles-Provence 2013. There, multiple understandings of the purpose of cultural initiative intersected – sometimes in tension and conflict - as different actors within multiple agendas, operating within various socio-spatial scales came together within diverse fields of power. The second ‘act’ of the conference illustrates nicely some of the tensions in this policy field.

The public meeting was followed by a private working session for members of a network of policy actors from previous, current or future European Capital of Culture cities. The European Commission representative again gave a short presentation. This time she briefed participants on how the legal basis for this cultural project would be modified from 2014. She explained that changes were to be introduced following a “very honest” evaluation of previous Capitals of Culture, commissioned by the European Parliament. In light of the findings, she urged Capital of Culture organisers to tell a “European” story and to make more visible the ‘European’ dimension. She emphasised the key ‘European’ cultural policy goals as increasing artist mobility, supporting the creative industries, encouraging audience development and contributing towards ‘sustainable’ urban development. Shifting the geographic focus, she pressed organisers of future Capitals of Culture to involve their Central Governments in their activities, to make it more ‘national’, so to speak. She also acknowledged that the possibilities of ‘local’ policy-makers to implement the European cultural initiative could be impeded by political and economic changes at the national and transnational level.

The European Commission spokesperson left shortly afterwards, to return to Brussels. Subsequently the focus of discussions moved from ‘European’ to ‘local’ concerns, as participants exchanged ideas and views of the practicalities related to implementing the project. The focus on this occasion was how to develop urban tourism. The ‘European’ dimension seemed only to emerge in discussions on how to attract what some contributors defined as “*typical European Capital of Culture tourists*”. There was some talk of new ‘alternative’ cultural tourist strategies including visits to multi-ethnic and impoverished neighbourhoods. The latter seemed to reflect the rhetoric of social

4 OJ/EU/445 2014
inclusion that had been present in the public session. Yet during this (and other conferences and workshops) I was struck with the impression that the lives, values and concerns of the people – both cultural workers and urban dwellers - with whom I had carried out much of my fieldwork seemed abstract, objectified and frequently marginalised in the concerns of elite policy makers.

In this context, the objective of my study is to explore how changing understandings and practices of culturally-infected urban development affects opportunities for urban dwellers living in impoverished urban neighbourhoods to participate in city and cultural making processes. I consider how the ‘cultural turn’ in urban policy has affected understandings, representations and experiences of social relations and cultural value. Using the European Capital of Culture project serves as a starting point to think through this issue, I explore two specific European Capital of Culture cities: Liverpool, European Capital of Culture in 2008, and Marseilles, title-holder of this event in 2013.

**Positioning the study within the wider research**

The interests of my thesis intersect with a burgeoning corpus of literature from across urban studies, geography, sociology and anthropology exploring urban transformations in the light of major economic and political restructuring since the 1970s. Much of this work has considered questions of urban governance and policy implementation (see for example Bodirsky 2012; Kalb 2012; Peck 2011). Often attention is given to the ways competitive inter-urban repositioning strategies focusing on cultural tourism contribute to patterns of displacement of certain – often racialised and impoverished - groups from the symbolic and material realms of the city. A growing body of work also considered the roles of artists and cultural workers in urban transformation, often linked to processes of gentrification (seminal texts include Ley 2003; Zukin 1989; 1995). In parallel, many rich ethnography studies have detailed the experiences of urban dwellers who are dealing with the consequences of these changes (Low 1996).

While this research has shed light on contemporary forms of social change, gaps remain. In scholarship focusing on the circulation of policy narratives and practices and/or activities of cultural workers, ‘ordinary people’ or urban dwellers living in impoverished parts of the city tend to feature as the objects or ‘victims’ of certain urban, national or transnational transformations. Conversely where the focus is on everyday
experiences of city dwellers, the research tends to be ‘local’ in scope (Herzfeld 2004: 205). Connections between everyday interactions and broader, multi-scalar processes of structural change are often left out of the picture. The ways in which ordinary individuals and groups living in impoverished parts of the city are a constitutive element of city-making processes remains under-theorised.

Building on the pioneering work of researchers such as Neil Smith (1996) and Ida Susser (2012 [1985]), my research seeks to bridge these bodies of knowledge by bringing together macro-processes of restructuring, elite policy-making, official forms of cultural production and the lives of ordinary urban dwellers in Liverpool and Marseilles. This is not an arbitrary choice. It reflects how in the field I encountered multiple networks operating at the local, national or European level that came to ground in particular locations. Further, to capture the complexity of contemporary processes of ‘culturally-inflected urban development’, I have adopted an approach that is deliberately cross-disciplinary, folding in an analysis of history and geography with that of the broader political economy, bureaucratic processes and everyday lives. I outline my methodology towards the end of this opening chapter.

Towards a comparative, relative analysis of cities

The conference in Marseilles embodies the techniques through which particular knowledge and ways of seeing the world are shared; it also illustrates the ways in which urban actors indexically link urban spaces with elsewheres. As such it reflects the inherently comparative dimension of increasingly competitive strategies of urban development.

Comparison is inbuilt within, and embodied by, the plethora of inter-city systems of ranking that position cities within national or international league tables (Ward 2010). Conversely, at the current moment in social research, empirical, theoretically-conceived comparative studies in general, and relational studies of (culturally-inflected) urban development in particular, remain sporadic. This has not always been the case. There were some early attempts by Marxist theorists to theorise urban development based on a

5 Many phrases are used to describe the ‘cultural turn’ in urban policy. Following Peck (2011), I have opted for culturally-inflected urban development, as it seems least politically loaded, and implies that the degree of ‘culture’ involved in development can vary.
city’s position within the global systems of capitalist production (as in the early work of Manuel Castells; see: Susser 2002). However comparative thinking was deeply unsettled in the wake of the anti-essentialist drives of post-structuralist, postcolonial and deconstructist movements (da Col 2015). Comparative researchers risked being dogged with charges of structural pre-determinism.6

Fresh efforts to defend comparative approaches have surfaced recently. This research project responds to calls within both urban studies and social anthropology for a return of a ‘relational’, ‘radical’ or ‘partial’ comparative imaginary in order to develop greater interpretive understandings about social change (da Col 2015; Strathern 2004; Ward 2010). In the next section I set out what I hope to achieve by deploying a comparative framework. I then lay out how I conceptualise the units of comparison in a way that avoids universalising essentialisms and remains attentive to how urban actors are both shaped by structural change, and adopt, appropriate or contest dominant urban transformations in unequal relations of power.

**Why compare? Establishing the purpose of this comparison**

While, at its most basic level, a comparative approach enables at least two phenomena to be juxtaposed, which can help draw out similarities and differences (Ward 2010), different comparative models set out to achieve particular tasks. Tilly (1984:82-83) provides a useful overview of four broad tendencies in how comparison has been applied in historical social science. According to Tilly, comparative projects can generally be divided into those that seek to “individualise”, “universalise”, “encompass” or identify variations. Individualising comparison highlight the particularities of different cases. Universalising comparisons explore phenomena thought to follow the same patterns. Encompassing comparisons examine how cases differ depending on their position within a complete system (such as in world systems theory). Finally, variation-finding comparative projects explore similarities and variants in the intensity or the character of a phenomenon. In the latter case, examples are chosen because they are either very similar or distinct, with the aim of attempting to better understand why such differences or similarities persist.

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6 I observed this at a seminar on comparison in ethnography at the *Rencontres annuelles d’ethnographie* in Paris October 2015. A number of the participants expressed concerns that comparative framework led to the reification of the objects of study.
Variation-finding in culturally-inflected urban development

While it is perhaps never quite as clear-cut as this, I situate my comparative work within the final, variation-finding, category. To be clear, I consider that most urban locations around the world are undergoing political, economic, social and cultural change, a considerable part of which - although not all - can be attributed to the domination of neoliberal ideology, and policy models that have become increasingly prevalent since the 1970s. I do not expect uniform responses to such changes, rendering social relations and understandings of culture the same in different places. However, in contrast to those who posit the radical alterity of social spaces (Holy 1987; Robinson 2011), I do not assume that each city is uniquely different.

The work of this variation-finding comparison is to use empirical evidence to tease out how broad political and economic conditions differentially materialise in particular locations, in ways that shape how people and places are seen and experienced, and affect opportunities and barriers for people living in impoverished urban areas to participate in city and cultural-making processes.

Comparing what? Developing conceptual clarity about the units of analysis

Both theoretical assumptions and personal inclination underlie the choice of units of study and the way they are understood (Strathern 2004). I begin here by clarifying how I work with the slippery terms of ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘culture’ across various social spaces and time. This is followed by descriptions of the concepts of social difference (notably race, ethnicity, class and gender) and the relative position of spaces and places (such as cities and neighbourhoods) in a cross-country comparative study that intersects different political and ideological frameworks for representing and managing culture and socio-spatial relations.

i. A word about neoliberalism

Animated discussions about the value of ‘neoliberalism’ as a conceptual analytic have surfaced within the social sciences recently. A key concern is that the growing ubiquity

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7 The motion for debate at the 2012 Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory held in Manchester, UK, ‘The concept of neoliberalism has become an obstacle to the anthropological understanding of the twenty-first century’ is a case in point. Also see volume 20, issue 3 of Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale, where a special issue was dedicated to this question.
of its usage has purged the concept of any explanatory power. I concur that if too carelessly applied its blanket coverage can obscure how actors and institutions participate in social transformations within a given locality. Nevertheless I also agree with those who argue that the term is necessary if we are to capture the current major structural trends affecting social relations around the world (Kalb 2012; Peck and Theodore 2012a; Wacquant 2012). However, if the term is to have critical utility, careful definition is indispensable. This makes it possible to measure to what extent - if at all - certain phenomena are part of larger ‘neoliberal’ processes (Dikeç 2006).

For definitional purposes I draw upon a rich scholarship on neoliberalism that has developed across the social sciences. Emphasising that neoliberalism is both an ideology and a policy agenda, this literature describes how “new forms of political-economic governance premised on the extension of market relations” (Larner 2000, in Dikeç 2006: 61) emerged in North America and Western Europe, following the breakup of the model of welfare-state capitalism put in place after the Second World War (see Brenner and Theodore 2002; Jessop 2002; Harvey 2005; Mayer 2013; Sassen 2000). The ideological dimension centres on new sets of stories about the right way to do things, including managing states, spaces, cities and individuals, based on the criteria of economic value (Dikeç 2006; Thrift 1999). The logic of the market becomes incorporated into every aspect of social life. Traits such as entrepreneurialism, competition, privatisation and individualism have been given greater importance, transforming understandings of value, personhood and socio-spatial relations.

When implemented, policies that are developed based on neoliberal premises can fashion considerable structural change. For instance, the drive for market-led growth has led to transformations in the configuration and governance of state territory. Examples include an increase in the decentralisation of Central Government power to local or regional bodies, the creation of metropolitan regions, the development of new supra-national bodies to facilitate the movement of capital (the market-led model of the European Union is one of the most developed examples), as well as new forms of localism (for example, neighbourhood-based Councils).

Neoliberal policy agendas have led to transformations of forms of institutional governance, including semi-public administrative bodies that receive financial support and direction from the government (‘quangos’), new urban development agencies and
public-private partnerships. As universal redistribution models are broken up, administrative areas of different geographical focus (neighbourhood, urban or regional) are increasingly forced to compete for private and public investment (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 1989; Swyngedouw 1997). As this orthodoxy gains greater hold, increasing reliance is placed on market-based criteria such as efficiency, productivity and profitability to evaluate public policies across the board, including those policies managing culture and social relations.

Cities have played a central role in this latest round of globe-spanning political and economic transformation, serving as laboratories for market-driven policy experiments (Brenner and Theodore 2002). With the restructuring of capitalism and reduction in Central Government funding, many urban leaders see little alternative but to test out new policies in land-use and zoning, tax cuts, reduction in services and the destruction of social housing areas to make way for speculative redevelopment (Harvey 1989; Savitch and Kantor 2002). Part of the cultural ‘turn’ in urban policy needs to be seen in this light. In the face of reduced public funding, culturally-led initiatives promoting high-end consumption and place rebranding have come to be considered one of the few cards with which urban leaders can play (Jessop 2013 [1997]; Zukin 1995). Thus, around the world heritage projects, architecture, promotion of various artistic forms of expression and of particular consumer-based urban lifestyles and tourism have become viewed as locational assets to increase city ‘attractivity’ within the global marketplace of cities (Mayer 2013; Peck 2005).

A growing body of research points to how the spread of such norms and practices have affected social, political, economic and – key here - cultural relations in cities in Europe and North America. It is important to note that the contemporary phenomenon of the “culturalization of politics” (Brown 2006) has emerged in parallel with the spread of a neoliberal agenda. Present-day multicultural policies were informed by the civil rights movements, post-colonial struggles, and more generalised politicised opposition by students, workers and other activists on the left; rising up against the standardisation of the post-war era (Mayer 2013). However, by the end of the 20th century, the rhetorical celebrating of diversity became - in many instances - co-opted as a new logic for capitalism and a new arena of governance, in ways that relegated questions of social and economic inequality to the side-lines (Gilroy 2004; Rose 1999 in Brandtstädter et al.)
2011) run through with racialised understandings of difference (Gilroy 2004; Wikan 1999)

Many have argued that focus on market-led growth rather than collective consumption has been linked to increases in socio-economic inequalities and the displacement of certain - often racialised and impoverished - groups from the city (Harvey 2005; Smith 1996). Yet it is important to remember that what neoliberalism is or does differs around the world: Understandings and practices are affected by what is already in place (including state and municipal norms and institutions, migrations, histories, social attachments, economic structures, political movements and individual actors). Attention to what Brenner and Theodore (2002) call “actual existing neoliberalism” is central to this study.

ii. On ‘culture’

The term ‘culture’ emerged in many - but, of course, not all - of the ‘everyday’ and ‘ordinary’ contexts investigated in the course of my research, as well as among certain elite urban decision-makers and cultural workers. Some research participants defined notions of culture by mapping certain practices on to geographical units, for example talking about “Liverpool culture” or “French culture”. Usually, this served to defend or to disparage particular practices in relation to elsewheres. Some people asserted that they “weren’t cultural” and denied doing anything “cultural”. In these cases, people were generally talking about aesthetic practices, with culture associated with the ‘high arts’. Typically, there was an implicit or explicit relational dimension in peoples’ use of the term. People compared themselves with others who they felt were or were not “cultural”. They talked about people who had more ‘cultural capital’ than themselves, in ways that were cut through with notions of class and race. When I asked a woman who had fled civil unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo whether she did anything cultural she covered her ears, as if the word itself evoked painful memories.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1979), I understand ‘capital’ to be a relative concept, with elite groups possessing more than others. Capital is also structured along political, economic, social and cultural grounds. Those who might have considerable cultural capital may not have economic capital and vice versa. In the French context, ‘cultural capital’ is often interpreted in terms of educational qualifications and in the UK, with regard to cultural practices (Serre and Wagner 2015). I intend here to explore when and where certain dispositions, objects and institutions are given cultural value and function relationally.
Some people referred to certain industries or artistic institutions as being “cultural”. Few people actually defined what they meant by the concept.

As Stolcke (2011, in Coello de la Rosa 2014: 108) notes, the idea of culture has become as “ubiquitous as it is ambiguous”. What is understood by the term is often not specified in both the social sciences and public policy (Barber 1955). Alternatively, some scholars have adopted tight definitions of culture for analytical purposes (see Bennett 2013).

My aim is not to provide a rigid definition of what I mean by culture. Though, at this juncture, it is worth stating that I take a broad ‘Tylerian’ approach to the concept (Tyler 2006 [1871]). I understand culture as referring to a whole way of life; a lived culture resulting from social relations and practices that occur within webs of social structures that shift over time and space. I equally understand culture to be the multiple forms of signification and meaning-making, including the arts, that circulate in multi-scalar social fields.9

When thinking of culture in relation to cities, I follow Zukin (1995) in seeing “the cultures of cities,” (to cite the title of her book) as emerging through the intersection of notions of social difference, ethnicities, migration, (national and local) political cultures, labour relations, formal cultural institutions and particular urban landscapes that are substantiated within practices circulating in the local, national or transnational spheres referred to above. I consider cities as localities where people understood as ‘cultural workers’ produce or sell their work as well as places of ‘cultural’ consumption, and sites where the production and consumption of urban culture takes place within ongoing shifts in capital accumulation and political transformation. I note that in the last decade, reified and rhetorical celebrations of multiculturalism have tended to prove vulnerable to counter-movements that claimed cultural diversity and multiculturalism was a threat to the national social fabric, particularly after the World Trade Centre attacks in September 2011(Lentin 2014).

Yet, unlike much research into cultural practices, this is not an exploration of changing patterns in certain forms of tightly-defined cultural consumption (see Latimer and Munro 2015 for a critique). Such studies - often linked to measuring the effect of a

9 By ‘social field’, I mean the multiple, interlocking matrices of social networks that are shaped by a range of social systems, and through which travel actions, ideas, and values (Glick Schiller 2003)
policy or intervention - tend to describe what is meant by ‘culture’ in relation to hegemonic understandings of cultural value (Markusen 2008; Skeggs 2015). The ‘success’ of a particular project is then gauged on the participation or reaction of subaltern groups or individuals to these dominant standards; for example by measuring ‘audience participation’ in elite art forms (Latimer and Munro 2015). Top-down approaches of this kind can disregard the differential ways in which ‘cultures’ are produced through situated social process. The ‘minor’ ‘folk’ practices and sociabilities of everyday life, and the ways in which ordinary people apply their own set of classifications and value-judgements can be missed out (Scott 1998; Wacquant 2008). Focusing on participation in culture can also ignore shifting political and economic conditions.

Rather than reducing the complexity of the term for comparative purposes, I try to keep the multiplicity of meanings and practices visible, attempting to provide a critical, relational and comparative analysis of how, where and when the concept of culture is evoked, and where it is positioned within hierarchical relations of value. This offers a means to open up questions of who, and what, is considered of (cultural) value, who is considered and represented as being involved in city and cultural-making processes, and where and when this occurs.

iii. Comparing urban spaces, while avoiding “seeing like a state”

This study compares urban social interactions in impoverished neighbourhoods in two ‘downscale’ cities. Yet I have tried to avoid solely relying on the official spatial categorisations of state governments and city planners when attempting to consider what or where a city, neighbourhood or quartier is. Such official spatial categorisations have a social utility for the governing classes, as they render people and places more ‘visible’ and ‘legible’, and hence more manageable (Scott 1998; Trouillot 2001). However they also reflect dominant organisations of space. They do not, of course, capture the multiple ways in which people actually live, or the heterogeneous ways in which space and place are formed and experienced.

Nevertheless official framings of geographic difference regularly filter into commonsense understandings about how social spaces are seen and approached, including within academic research (de Certeau 1984; Glick Schiller 1992; Massey 2005). For instance, anthropological research has a long history of taking a state’s eye view of the
world, mapping distinct ‘cultures’ within politically-drawn borders - be it the nation, city or neighbourhood - in ways that ignore both internal differentiation and the multi-scalar processes through which social space is produced (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Contemporary examples can be found in ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘community’ studies in the UK, where ‘local’ people are researched as if their lives take place solely within bounded geographical areas. Urban studies in France share this trend, concentrating on the social space of the ‘banlieues’ or ‘quartiers’ (Dikeç 2006; Tissot 2006), focusing on the exclusion of certain ‘problematic’ and ‘marginal’ groups from ‘society,’ and the role (or failure) of French institutions in this (Rogers 2002). Focusing on ‘the neighbourhood’ alone can ignore how the everyday lives of urban dwellers are shaped by and in turn shape economic, political, social and cultural fields that are local, national or globe-spanning (Amin 2005). Equally, it is not uncommon for urban studies to fall in to the trap of “methodological urbanism” (Brenner 2011: 57), treating the city as an isolated unit of analysis, ignoring the role of the state or broader processes of capitalism from the analytical purview (see also Susser 2002).

I draw on the work of those who argue that social space need to be understood relationally, as produced by a multiplicity of perspectives and interactions that are multi-scalar, power-inflected, political, economic, social and cultural spheres (Massey 2007 in Arapoglou 2012: 228). Hence in my research, the spatial units of analysis - impoverished urban areas and the cities of Liverpool and Marseilles - are treated as ‘entry points’ from where to tease out and compare the multiplicity of sometimes intertwining, sometimes overlapping, sometimes disconnected networks of networks. From this vantage point I explore the ways in which urban spaces achieve distinct, heterogeneous identities as places (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Massey 2005).

iv. On social difference and social relations

In both cases, research began in areas associated with people of visible migrant background. I started out with the assumption that everyday understandings and practices of urban space could differ depending on ethnicity, class, gender, access to goods and services and in relation to the ‘abstract spaces’ of urban place marketing (Smith 1992). However considerable effort has been taken to try and avoid adopting common-sense assumptions and experiences about when ‘race,’ ‘ethnicity’ - or any other form of social difference - mattered in the formation of social relations.
Avoiding the ethnic lens

Much research on impoverished urban areas or migrant studies is developed by researchers adopting an “ethnic lens” (Glick Schiller et al 2006). This metaphor describes studies that consider ethnic (or racialised) difference the primary variable that defines the unit of study and analysis. Yet this is a basic essentialism (Smith 1992), treating individuals and groups as unified objects defined by only one field of their identity. Carrying out comparisons between ‘ethnic groups’ risks making generalisations about the homogeneity of people within a social category, ignoring the ways that other factors - such as gender, class and age - influence social rapport. Moreover, where ‘race’ and ethnicity (and class and gender) are taken as given, the ways in which ‘black’ or ‘white’ racialised identities emerge and endure in time and place are overlooked (Gilroy 2004; Mullings 2005). This latter point is particularly relevant given that different official categories were used for categorising and observing individuals and groups in France and the UK. I discuss the differences in the national models for managing social difference below. Last, and by no means least: studies that adopt an ‘ethnic lens’ are often influenced by governmental concerns with the supposed threats posed by national, ethnic or religious diversity (Glick Schiller et al 2006). This is manifest in the growing body of work in the UK looking at urban social relations in terms of ‘community cohesion’ or ‘integration’ (Forrest and Kearns 2001; Amin 2005). In these studies, social relations are measured normatively against notions of an ideal cohesive ‘neighbourhood’, or ‘community.’

Looking for ordinariness

This is not to say that ethnicity and ‘race’ were not important in my research. As is set out below, understandings and experiences of urban spaces and social interactions in both Liverpool and Marseilles have long been influenced by different expressions of racism and xenophobia that shifted time and space (see also Témime 1985; Ben-Tovim et al. 1992). Equally, in each city, at different times, various religious, national and ethnic networks have been crucial in supporting individuals to make a place for themselves. The point is that race or ethnicity are not ignored; the objective is to avoid assuming that these categories are either all-important or immaterial (Gilroy 2004).

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10 What has been said above in relation to race or ethnicity holds equally for research projects that take abstract categories such as ‘class’ or ‘gender’ as the relevant variables for a comparison.
To explore local production of social difference I commenced my analysis with the assumption that all social relations were ‘ordinary’. It is a stance that might seem somewhat disingenuous; I suggest that it can avoid the trap of “seeing like a state” (Scott 1998). For if social processes are assumed to be ‘ordinary,’ difference - be it racialised, gendered, or class-based - is seen as a consequence of social practices. Further, given that something becomes ordinary or loses its ordinariness in relation to its frequency or repetition, this is a lens that draws attention to the temporality of spatial relations (Cavell 1986). The focus becomes what is considered new or out-of-the-ordinary within a particular time or place, and - most importantly - in social relations inflected with power (Roger 2000). Racialised or class-based relations then become a matter for empirical enquiry, rather than a taken-for-granted starting point (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Lindgren 2006; Smith 1992).

*Researching ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘class’ and ‘gender’*

In the field I was attentive to note down when I considered particular forms of identity, such as visible migrant background, ‘whiteness’ or ‘class’ as structuring participation in urban processes. For example, when attending events I noted what I saw as the dominant racialised or ethnic identity or class position of participants, and contrasted this with different groups or individuals I saw to be on the margins of the activity. This attention to racialised difference differs from dominant trends in other European academic traditions, and indeed much social anthropology, where there can be hesitancy about mentioning ‘race’ or colour (Mullings 2005; Wade 2015). I argue that these observations offer a means to focus on the identities and dynamics of powerful groups. It helped me to think through who had the power to control resources, social organisation, understandings of values and meaning. Of course, my descriptions detailing research participants as ‘male’, ‘European’, ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘of North African origin’ and/or ‘middle class’ and subsequent analysis was influenced by an amalgam of my own inculcation in UK multicultural policy, a ‘British’ sensibility to class, my own social position as a white, British middle class woman and terms that I heard used in the field.

v. **On scale, hierarchy and values**

Other key analytics in this comparative exercise in theory-building are the terms ‘scale’, ‘hierarchy’ and ‘value’.
Scalar processes and socio-spatial reordering

Scalar metaphors often serve describe particular connections between geographical units. In urban studies, spatial units are generally conceptualised in terms of verticality. For example, social phenomena are described as urban, national, transnational or global. While such relationships are social produced, they are often taken for granted and rendered static. The units of the neighbourhood, city, state etc. are then researched and represented as if they were nested boxes positioned on a ‘scale’ extending from the local to the global. The neighbourhood is assumed to fit within the jurisdiction and the influence of the city, the city within the state and so on (see Brenner 2011 for a discussion of the debates in this area in urban geography).

Such static approaches to socio-spatial relations have resulted in the prevalence of one aspect of what has been called “methodological nationalism” within urban studies (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). That is, where social relations across the national territory are assumed to be homogenous, and the nation-state figures as the most significant spatial scale for determining social and spatial relations in the city. If I were to follow such an approach, the fact that Liverpool is in the UK, and Marseilles in France, would be seen as the key variables in understanding differences in the organisation and understandings of culture and social relations.

‘Global cities’ scholarship advanced thinking in this sphere (Sassen 1991). This research examined how a handful of powerful metropolises had more in common with each other than cities situated within their respective nation-states. These insights have been built upon and developed in research that explores how the relative scalar location of all cities is affected by the fragmented restructuring of global capital. Together, these analyses shifted understandings of the significance of the state in how social space is understood, represented and experienced as an object of empirical enquiry (Brenner 1997; 2011; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). The state’s influence on understandings and experiences of a city’s positions began to be seen as contingent, affected by relative location within multi-scalar, multi-dimensional circuits of power. As is done here, the role of the state is studied alongside the increasing power of multi-national capital, shifting forms of supra and sub-national institutions of governance, as well as proximity to and distance from other urban centres, migration histories, cultural reputation and relations of capital and labour.
On narrative, hierarchy and value

The concepts of scale and hierarchy have also experienced renewed interest within anthropological enquiry in the last decade (Houseman 2015; Strathern 2004). I draw particularly on the work of Calgar and Glick Schiller (2011), who have attempted to advance debates on urban re-scaling processes. They draw attention to the ways in which socio-spatial concepts of scale (for example, operating within global, Mediterranean, European, neighbourhood spheres) are not just about geographic relationships but also about narratives, values and power (ibid.: 6). An example helps elaborate this point. Patterns of transnational migration are social phenomena that can transform social spaces and shift the spatial scale of social relations within particular urban places. Yet how migration is represented is configured in relation to multiple, overlapping, evolving hierarchical relations of power. As illustrated in the thesis in Liverpool and Marseille, certain forms of migration were racialised and devalued, while others become integrated within urban repositioning strategies, affecting opportunities for incorporation within the city. In a similar fashion, hierarchies of cultural value can result in the reordering of spaces and places, with implications for local experiences of culture and relative positioning (Herzfeld 2004).

However, prevailing ideologies and relative positions within hierarchies of value are neither uniform nor stable; nor do they necessarily efface subordinate forms of values that might continue to have meaning in the shaping of socio-spatial relations (Houseman 2015). Thus in this study I investigate multiple experiences and representations of scale, hierarchy and value, to see how these differ depending on ethnic, class-based and gendered relations, and in relation to dominant narratives and practices of urban place-making.

On comparing ‘culture’ in Europe over time and space

In short, the production of culture and cultural value is configured through the intersection of institutions, ideologies and politics of culture, ethnicity and identity within ‘local’, ‘national’, ‘European’ and ‘global’ spheres in hierarchical relations of power (Wedel and Feldman 2005). The presentation with which I opened this thesis illustrated this well. In her talk, the European Commission representative hinted at how the focus and meaning of the European Capital of Culture policy had changed over
time. I now sketch out these broader transformations in more detail, before setting out the interest of exploring such phenomena in Liverpool and Marseilles.

1985 - Culture and the ‘ever closer union’

The idea for the European Capital of Culture (or ‘City of Culture’ as it was called between 1985 - 1999) was put forward when the ideological, economic and social tectonics of the project of European economic and political integration were shifting (Green 2012). In the 1950s, the key instigators of the early European treaties had viewed the political project of a federal Europe as a long-term goal (Holmes 2003). Three decades later, the idea of a European federal project became usurped by market-led growth and neoliberal structural reform, as political leaders of the ten member states of the European Economic Community were dealing with the painful restructuring of the global political economy that had led to national recessions and a political, economic ‘crises’ and growing concern xenophobia in Europe (Calligaro 2013: 3; Holmes 2000). Across the European Community, member states and publics were increasingly ‘Eurosceptic.’

As the European Commission speaker noted, in this context, culture was deployed as a means to increase legitimacy and support for the creation of the single market that was established in the Maastricht Treaty of the European Union in 1992 (see also Patel 2013; Shore 2000). Cultural projects were seen as a means to develop some symbolic content, and foster a sense of common European identity, based on common ‘European’ values (Calligaro 2013). Yet national leaders remained very protective about maintaining control over what was a highly-sensitive policy area, touching, as it does, on questions of national sovereignty and identity (Patel 2013). Thus, in the early years, no legal powers were granted to the European Commission in the cultural field.

When the European Capital of Culture project was first mooted there was no clear definition of what ‘culture’ meant (OJ EC 1985). The Resolution simply required the cultural programme to include elements that could be deemed characteristically ‘European.’ The choices of Athens, Paris and Amsterdam as the first three European Capitals of Culture, however, points to common understandings of the self-evidence of ‘European’ culture, based on the notion of a shared history, ‘European’ values of humanism and democracy, and ‘elitist’, ‘Western’ art forms. Cultural diversity was essentially understood to be the diversity of different national cultures (Calligaro 2013).
The social work of the project was conceptualised as forging relationships between populations of the different member states (OJ EC 1985). In short, for pro-European leaders, the notion of culture served to promote Europe as “a coherent, if internally multiple whole” (Green 2012: 296).

1990s – From the state to the city

In the late 1980s, reflecting a cultural turn in urban governance described above (and as we will see in both Liverpool and Marseilles), some European-level funding promoted investment in ‘cultural industries,’ including some activity funded by European Regional Development Funds. Somewhat ironically, the city was not initially an official ‘object’ of the European City of Culture initiative. A more explicit urban focus developed in the early 1990s, largely driven by the actions of ‘local’ policy-makers responding to the changing political economy of cities.

The selection of Glasgow for this title in 1990, one of the poorest local authorities in the UK, badly hit by the political and economic restructurings of the 20th century and stigmatised as a failing, working class, ‘low-cultural’ place, is now read as a marker in a shift in the way in which culture was understood and operationalised (see Patel 2013). However transformations in cultural value should not be over exaggerated. Despite the promotion of a city not previously associated with the ‘high arts’ and the organisation of cultural events in former-industrial buildings, the cultural content in Glasgow’s Capital of Culture programme largely reflected dominant understandings of cultural value.

Ordinary, ‘working class’ forms of cultural expression were marginalised in ways that resonate with processes that I describe in Liverpool and Marseilles (Garcia 2004; Mooney 2004).

Perhaps more significantly in terms of shifting scalar social relations, with Glasgow’s selection there was a shift in rhetorical terms from a focus on ‘national cultures’ to the commodification of urban cultural production. Of note, this was a period when city authorities were facing swingeing cuts in the UK and local authorities were forced to become increasingly entrepreneurial in order to attract diminishing resources (Harvey 2005; Jessop 2013 [1997]). Urban leaders involved in Glasgow’s bid organised a European conference of urban policy-makers, and looked to the European Commission to raise the profile and the reputation of the cultural programme. This was the start of a reciprocal relationship between European technocrats wishing to increase their role in
the European cultural sphere and cities (see OJ EC 1990), and tactical urban actors looking to ‘jump scale’ (MacLoed and Goodwin 1999), searching beyond the nation-state to compete for public and private resources.

1999 – Culture in an expanding EU

The concept of ‘culture’ was formally introduced into European-level policy in the Treaty on European Union signed in Maastricht in 1992. Initially this had little impact on the Capital of Culture project. However a conjuncture of different political, economic and social factors emerged in the mid-1990s, that affected the mood, focus and language of European policymaking in general and the understandings of culture in particular (Shore 2000).

In the first place, the controversial expansion of the EU in 2004, to include a number of countries from former socialist central and eastern Europe, posed a challenge to essentialised assumptions about European identity, European borders and European culture, and led to a shift in the geopolitical balance of power (Green 2012). As discussed below, French leaders were concerned that the extension of the EU eastwards would increase German political domination of the EU (Schmid 2003). French interest in the development of a Euro-Mediterranean economic area to the south of the EU border should be seen in light of efforts to maintain French influence within EU foreign affairs (Bullen 2012). 11

Secondly, the growing pressure to recognise post-colonial claims for cultural citizenship and claims to for multiple cultural minorities to be recognised as legitimate that had been simmering from the 1960s until the 1990s began to influence EU policymaking (Lentin 2014; Stolcke 1995). At the national and supranational level, there was a switch to a reconceptualisation of economic and social problems in terms of a lack of ‘integration’ of particular collective groups (Grillo 2010; Eriksen 2010). Within EU policy circles, technocrats based in the Directorate General responsible for culture began working in partnership with institutional bodies such as the Council of Europe

11 These changes affected the socio-spatial identities of both Marseilles and Liverpool. As I discuss in Part 1, Marseilles’ location on the Mediterranean basin led the city to become increasingly positioned as a potential hub for developing EU/French interests in North Africa and the Middle East by certain urban decision-makers. For Liverpool, situated on the Atlantic coast, the city began to seem peripheral with regards to the ‘centre’ of Europe.
and UNESCO; organisations that had begun to play a key role in promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. These multi-scalar dynamics were institutionalised at the EU-level in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, which included new anti-discrimination provisions that had significant implications for the organisation of social difference in both France and the UK.

Thirdly, concerns about the costs of the integration of ten largely impoverished member states at a time of stagnating growth across the Eurozone led to tough budget negotiations between EC Directorates and different member states. A new focus on competition and economic growth was outlined for the EU in the Lisbon Agenda. Given the weak treaty basis for cultural policy-making at the European level and a lack of political support for European cultural policies from national leaders, policy officers at the European Commission increasingly aligned investment in culture with market-led development.

All the while, the political legitimacy of the EU continued to lose favour, not helped by the massive corruption scandal that hit the European Commission in 1999 (Shore 2000). Where the European Commission had previously played an important behind-the-scenes role working towards greater political union, the chastened institution saw its role redefined as having a more administrative function, delimited as a ‘neutral’ facilitator of economic development of the EU, with some scope for external EU relations and a minor role to aid member states with collective ‘social’ problems (although, as Boitanski and Chapello (2005) remind us, such moves are intensely political, and endemic of the “new spirit of capitalism”). Somewhat ironically, under the new bureaucratic, ‘neutral’ reign, the influence of the Commission in defining the language of the competing cities actually increased, at least during the bidding process. Each applicant city had to follow guidelines setting out why they should win the award and how they intended to implement it, and their applications were to be judged by a panel of European experts (Lähdesmäki 2010).

Together, these (multi-dimensional and multi-scalar) factors influenced what ‘culture’ - already a policy field run through with ambiguities and contradictions - came to mean and do in Europe (Holmes 2000). The Decision of 1999 establishing the European Capitals of Culture between 2005-2019 makes this clear. In line with the Lisbon Agenda, there was a strong emphasis on instrumentalising culture to promote economic
growth and jobs. New concepts of ‘creative’ and ‘cultural’ work were introduced. Now cities were required to demonstrate how they would “exploit” the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life in the city within their bids (OJ EC 1999: 4). This language deliberately encourages commodifying urban culture for urban place-marketing.

In parallel, increased emphasis was placed on ‘social objectives’. Bid writers had to describe how they would encourage the mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population and from 1999 the promotion of ‘cultural diversity’ had informally become a prerequisite for successful European Capital of Culture applications (Lähdesmäki 2010). Yet in the context of growing anxiety about the ‘integration’ of migrants, understandings of cultural diversity were structured in terms of differentiating between ‘European culture’ and culture from ‘outside Europe’. Furthermore, in line with the Commission’s positioning of itself in relation to EU foreign policy, cities were requested to demonstrate how they would promote dialogue between European cultures and those cultures from other parts of the world. Effectively this rendered ‘foreign’ people of non-European origin, echoing new boundaries and rhetoric of exclusion emerging across Europe (Amin 2004; Lähdesmäki 2010; Stolcke 1995). Bid writers in Liverpool would submit their bid under this regime.

2006 - Culture in a ‘globalising world’

In 2006, again as a consequence of broader political and economic upheaval, the European Parliament voted another Decision on the European Capital of Culture. This time, the new legal basis of the cultural policy - under which Marseilles’ bid was submitted - was affected by the ‘no vote’ in the referendum on the European Constitution by France and Ireland in 2004. Partly connected to concerns about the accession of Turkey to the EU, partly to do with fears about expanding migration from new to old member-states (Bertossi 2007), the no vote shook the confidence of EU policy-makers and challenged the legitimacy of European institutions. Additionally, fierce budget struggles were underway in preparation for the new EU budget cycle that would begin in 2007. I met some of the policy workers involved in these negotiations in my research. ¹² They described how they had to fight hard to prove the value of culture

¹² ENCATC 2010 Annual conference, Brussels, 6-8 October 2010
and to develop this cultural policy initiative. To do so, they drew on ‘expert evidence’ to make ‘evidence-based policy’ and align their work with other policy fields.

In this context, a six-month study was commissioned to review all previous European Capital of Culture titleholders, from 1985 to 2004 (Palmer 2004). The recommendations of the study are couched in neutral-sounding terms, but reflect well the shifting norms and values behind cultural policymaking in Europe. The report endorsed “the value and importance of culture and the cultural experience as a central unifying concept” (without defining what was meant by ‘culture’), and placed the policy within the framework of “the challenges of European integration and diversity” (ibid: 190). To note; diversity is no longer a question of the diversity of member states and it is problematised.

Again, the potential of culture in EU foreign policy was underlined. This reflected a growing cultural component in relations with the EU’s southern periphery (Schumacher 2005), as well as European Commission’s actual involvement in the negotiations to establish the United Nations Convention for the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity in 2005. The latter was actually an international treaty to protect cultural or media industries in international trade negotiations. Nevertheless it opened up national and European cultural policy to broader discussions of regional and ethnic minority forms of cultural expression.

Issues of migration and of ethnic and religious diversity became central concerns for EU action in the cultural field (Calligaro 2013). Economic objectives for cultural policy remained primordial, however. Policy-makers told me that the key strategic document that shaped budget negotiations and formed the new legal basis of the Capital of Culture project was the 2006 report on the ‘Economy of Culture in Europe,’ that essentially focussed on the creative and cultural industries.

The Decision of 2006 exemplifies how far this policy field had moved from its beginnings 20 years earlier. It was even more prescriptive than in 1999: ‘Cultural’ objectives were divided into a ‘European dimension’ and ‘City and Citizens’. Under the European dimension, the aims of the ECOC are to:

- Foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and citizens from the host country and other EU countries in any cultural sector;
• Highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
• Bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

Under the ‘Cities and Citizens’ heading, the aims are to:

• Foster the participation of citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad;
• Be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

It is worth drawing attention to the separation of different spatial scales in the guidelines; the European dimension is effectively distinguished from the urban dimension. There is an almost complete ellipsis of nation-state. As I show throughout this thesis, the abstract separations of spatial orders had implications for the ways in which urban dwellers and cultural producers were represented and structured their opportunities for participation in the project and the city.

Why Liverpool and Marseilles?

Often comparative urban studies are chosen for pragmatic or arbitrary reasons, or selected based on certain structuring typologies, which identify places as ‘port city,’ ‘post-industrial city,’ ‘Mediterranean city,’ ‘second city’ etc. (Ward 2010). My choice of Liverpool and Marseilles builds on my understanding that these two cities share certain similar positions in political, economic, social and cultural terms within historically-situated, multi-scalar relations.

Similar geo-historical trajectories

1. Mercantile ports in emerging nation-states

Both Liverpool and Marseilles developed as mercantile ports in the Middle Ages. Marseilles emerged earlier, becoming a significant part of a web of Mediterranean city-states, situated outside the nascent French state (Sewell 1984). Liverpool’s growth from an insignificant fishing village to a ‘world’ city was more closely linked to English expansionism (Belchem 2000a). In the 13th century, Liverpool served as a port of

13 OJ/EC/1622 2006
disembarkation for the English conquest of Ireland. With the ‘discovery’ of America, this Atlantic-facing port would play a significant role in transatlantic commerce, notably the Transatlantic slave trade, which was dominated by merchants from Liverpool by the mid-18th century (Muir 1907). This was a time in the two cities’ histories when the urban elite was relatively bullish in rejecting the political and cultural domination of London and Paris. As with other pre-industrial, ‘patrimonial’ cities of the time (Grillo 2000; Sassen 2006), historical sources suggest migrants - particularly European migrants - were relatively easily incorporated into the urban fabric, although in unequal relations of power (Dell’Umbro 2006; Lee 1998; Sewell 1985).

2. Ports of empire

The two cities experienced significant material and symbolic repositioning during the colonial period of the 18th and 19th century. This was a time when enormous wealth was generated in these two gateway cities of empire. As with other European commercial ports that were not political capitals, the presence of a large labour force, from rural hinterlands and increasingly of migrant origin (Italian in Marseilles, Irish in Liverpool) resulted in both cities becoming associated with ‘foreigners,’ seen as falling outside national imaginaries, associated with barbarism and lack of civilisation: Reputations that continue to haunt both localities (Bias and Fabiani 2011; Brown 2005; Lee 1998).

Elites in both Liverpool and Marseilles attempted to transform the cities’ identities from ‘commercial’ to ‘cultural’ cities. In Marseilles’ case, the national state joined local actors in investing in grandiose buildings and cultural institutions as part of a broader national building project. In both cities, efforts to transform their reputations and upscale in cultural terms were undermined as those who had made their fortunes in the city tended to move out; to neighbouring Aix-en-Provence, Paris or London. Liverpool and Marseilles continued to be seen as ‘working class’ places, ‘far’ from the national political, economic and cultural epicentres of power (Bias and Fabiani 2011; Brown 2005).

3. Cities of chaos

In the 20th century, the position of both Liverpool and Marseilles on the world stage slid downscale in the restructuring of the global and national economy, most notably following the second-world war and subsequent decolonisation. Reputations of both cities as being working class, chaotic, unmanageable, economic failures and a-cultural
were intercut through with the language of ‘race’ (Belchem 2014; Dell’Umbria 2006). As I argue throughout this thesis, their respective weak position within the national and international ‘marketplace’ during this period of political and economic reconfigurations made both Liverpool and Marseilles highly vulnerable to the imposition of neoliberal urban restructuring by external policy-makers in the face of a growing need to attract public and private investment (Savitch and Kantor 2002).

Exploring national differences without ‘methodological nationalism’

After highlighting similarities, significant differences in the national-level organisation of social relations, the economy and ‘culture’ in France and the UK need to be noted here.

Managing social relations

British and French approaches to managing social difference are usually presented as polar opposites (Bertossi 2007). In the UK, the organisation of social relations has been informed by the recognition of racial, ethnic and cultural difference. Traditionally the UK government recognised the rights of minorities to maintain cultural differences, legitimised claims for distinct cultural identities and endeavoured to meet demands for culturally-sensitive services (Phillips 2010). The French Republican or ‘laic’ model for managing social relations, which dates back to the separation of church and the state in 1905, is based upon the notion of the uniqueness of the individual and is a direct contract between individual citizens and the state. Here ethnic, regional or religious distinctions are, in theory, disregarded, to the point where collecting data on the basis of ethnic or religious difference is illegal (Akan 2009; Bertossi 2007; Mitchell 2011).

In practice the differences are less straightforward. For instance, some scholars have noted a pragmatic multiculturalism developing in certain French cities (Mitchell 2011). In both countries, European-level legislation has reconfigured the organisation of difference. The incorporation of anti-discrimination legislation in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam had some impact on public debate in France, with calls for a new model of French Republicanism that could be more responsive to ethnic, religious and cultural diversity (Bertossi 2007). In the UK, the Race Relations institutional framework was

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14 The separation of the church and the state was never absolute, and formal and informal links continue to exist between the French state and the Catholic Church (see Akan 2009).
superseded by a broader anti-discrimination framework, which materialised in the Equality Act of 2010. In broad terms, since the early 2000s, the UK’s model of managed multiculturalism has shifted to a more assimilationist model.

National approaches to cultural policy

A second variable worth noting is the fact that Liverpool and Marseilles are situated in two countries that have developed distinct approaches towards managing ‘culture’ in the sense of aesthetic production. In the postwar period, the promotion of cultural policy at the national level has become intricately connected with ideas of French Republicanism. Underlying this idea is the sense that without a set of common cultural references, the political and physical unity of France would be threatened (Dikeç 2006). Accordingly policies promoting national cultural policy have been institutionalised via the Ministry of Culture since the late ‘50s. Despite a complicated multi-level policy framework involving municipal, departmental and regional government, cultural policy within France remains highly centralised (Urfalino 2010; Ingram 1998).

In contrast, the British government adopted an arms-length approach to the management of the arts with the establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1946. The first ministry of culture, media and sport was only established in 1997 under the centre-left ‘New Labour’ government of Tony Blair.¹⁵ The British cultural policy framework continues to be implemented via a wide range of institutions including government agencies, subsidised arts organisations, commercial companies and local authorities (Griffiths 2006; Griffiths, Bassett et al 2003). Municipalities around the UK have adopted differing approaches to managing culture, some placing culture under their economic development portfolio, others alongside sports and leisure services.

National models of urban development

A third variable to consider are the particular institutional frameworks and political cultures underpinning urban policy in France and the UK, and the fact that the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ response to the spread of neo-liberal ideology is often considered distinctive from that of France (Dikeç 2006; Hellie 2010).

¹⁵ ‘New Labour’ was the new brand of the UK Labour Party adopted in the 1990s
It is by being attentive to these different historic and political, economic and cultural conditions, while highlighting similarities in the two cities’ structural position within the restructuring of global capital, that this comparative study allows me to explore the extent to which participating in this European-level competition influence understandings, representations and experiences of social relations and culture on the ground.

**In the field**

**Researching Liverpool**

My study of Liverpool can be divided into two: firstly what might be called a “re-academic phase” and a second phase of formal fieldwork (Marcus and Okley 2007: 365).

In 2004 I was recruited on a short-term contract for the Central Government funded, area-based urban intervention to the east of the city centre of Liverpool, intersecting the Liverpool 6 and 7 postcode areas. I was responsible for developing projects that promoted cultural diversity and anti-racism. One of these, a community face painting project, forms the basis of an extended case study which I draw on in Part 2 and 3. While working for this agency I was able to observe the rolling out of policy and practice relating to Liverpool’s year as European Capital of Culture. In 2008 I left this urban agency and went on to set up two community interest companies (CICs) in Liverpool, one of which further developed the face painting project that is mentioned above. I did not take field notes during this pre-academic phase. I draw upon and analyse memories, email communications, filed documents, photographs, work notebooks and diaries that I amassed during that time.

I began studying for my thesis in 2009. In 2011, after ten months’ research in Marseilles, I began formal fieldwork in Liverpool. I identified research participants who would allow me to gain different perspectives on life in Liverpool to those observed during my time working for the urban development agency from 2004 - 2008. My condition for selecting research partners was that they should be involved in some form of ‘cultural’ project.
After a month spent approaching a variety of organisations without success I contacted an asylum support charity, where I knew that a number of artists and arts organisations had run creative workshops for asylum seekers between 2004 and 2008. The centre manager told me that the association did not “do culture any more” (offering an important insight into shifting priorities in the city during a climate of austerity). The association offered me a place in a refuge set up for a group of destitute women who had sought asylum in Britain but whose claims had been rejected.

Between October 2011 and February 2012 I lived with eight women from five different African and Asian countries in the presbytery of a Catholic church to the north-east of the city centre in the Liverpool 6 postcode area. As well as sharing in everyday conversations and activities and informal social events, discussions were held about their experiences of the city, and how these women understood notions such as culture (if at all).

In parallel, I conducted participant observation with an arts organisation set up in 1968 in another Christian religious building constructed in the 19th century, just south of the city centre on the cusp of the L1 and L8 postcode areas.\(^\text{16}\) The association’s website described their activity as being the first community arts project of its kind. According to a signboard hung outside the building, they aimed to bring “artists and communities together”. For approximately two days a week over a period of four months I would walk to the arts organisation from the refuge I was staying in. I hung out around the building, attended staff meetings, artistic and cultural programmes organised for young people, arts events and helped with funding proposals. I draw only briefly on this experience here, but my participant observation with this organisation provided me with a different perspective from which to see socio-spatial relations in Liverpool.

To supplement my field notes, I carried out 27 taped interviews and 2 informal interviews with individuals involved in urban, arts and cultural policy in the city. The interviews followed a set of semi-structured questions concerning the interviewees’ understandings of urban development, cultural policy and social diversity, although these questions were tailored depending upon their interests and knowledge-base. I tried

\(^{16}\) The UK is divided into wards for electoral and administrative purposes. Liverpool is divided into 30 wards. However in everyday interactions, the postcode district is a common marker of geographical location and socio-spatial identity.
to ensure as broad a range of views as possible: Interviewees included people working in voluntary and charitable associations, cultural associations, a local priest, local Councillors, politicians, business leaders and researchers.

**Researching Marseilles**

My main research phase in Marseilles commenced in October 2010. I used social networks in Liverpool to locate a woman in Marseilles who was involved in ‘cultural projects,’ who agreed to accept me as a lodger. Marie was a white Frenchwoman of Italian origin in her late sixties, this research participant lived in social accommodation in the 10th *arrondissement* in the south-east of Marseilles. As one French urban sociologist told me, revealing some of the assumptions that structure social research in Marseilles, that this was not a ‘typical’ place to do research. The majority of urban research based in Marseilles concentrates on the north of the city, in areas strongly associated with the presence of people of visible migrant background.

Via Marie, I was introduced to some of the activities of a Provençal association that developed and promoted economic and cultural links across the Provençal, Occitan, Catalan and Piedmonts regions as well as two, less formal, Provençal associations. The placement did not last long for personal and practical reasons, but nonetheless provided useful insights into particular understandings of cultural policy. I also was able to observe geographical patternings of social relations that were not based solely on class, neighbourhood relations and proximity, but were founded on shared norms and practices (Wimmer 2004).

To find new openings into the city, I began searching local newspapers and picking up marketing materials to glean information about cultural events or critical discussions on urban development. This resulted in a period of participant observation alongside the director of a street theatre association, carried out for two days a week between October 2010 and June 2011. This is described in Part 2. I also participated in a choir for local residents based in quartier of Saint-Mauront in the 3rd *arrondissement* of Marseilles, run by an artistic organisation.17 I describe this in Parts 2 and 3. I lived for some time with

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17 In France, *arrondissements* and *quartier* are administrative divisions of a city. There are 16 arrondissements in Marseilles and 111 quartiers. Arrondissements are paired into sectors, which, since 1983, have a local mayor. Quartier is also understood in more general terms as ‘neighbourhood.’
one of the choir members in her social accommodation on a social housing estate (*cité*) in the same quartier

During this time, I frequented a number of arts associations working in the area and developed personal affinities with a number of cultural workers. I participated in seminars, conferences and workshops organised by university departments, activists and intellectuals on topics including anthropology, urban development in Marseilles, gentrification and the socio-spatial effects of Marseilles Provence 2013. Towards the end of my fieldwork I set up 28 taped interviews and a number of unregistered discussions with artists and arts administrators, activists in anti-poverty work, leaders of social centres, urban regeneration managers, urban planners and architects, local political representatives, representatives from the local, departmental, regional and national state who were responsible for culture, *politiques de la ville* or city marketing. The interviews were structured around the same thematic questions that had been used in Liverpool.

From February to June 2012, I spent four days a week in the city centre offices of Marseilles Provence 2013. For three months I read policy documents, took part in informal office conversations with managers, project officers and administrative staff, attended meetings with institutional partners, also press conferences and the conference mentioned at the start of this chapter. During this period of fieldwork, I lived in a small flat on the edge of the quartier of Saint-Mauront in the 3rd arrondissement. My overall impression was that this area was generally considered a radically different social and cultural space to that occupied by the decision-makers involved in the Marseilles Capital of Culture programme. Additionally, over the last seven years, I have attended a number of European conferences on cultural policy and interviewed policy-makers operating within European networks.

**Narrating multiple perspectives of urban culture/s**

In many ways this is not a ‘typical’ ethnographic monograph, weaving in ethnographic observation of everyday relations in and across urban spaces with official representations provided by institutional actors, including the literature produced for the European Capital of Culture project. The strength of this approach is in being able to tease out how socio-spatial representations and practices and hierarchical
understandings of cultural values emerge in the interaction between what Lefebvre describes as ‘abstract space and ‘everyday’ spaces (Brenner 1997; Smith 1992).

To present the analysis, I have divided the main body of this study into large ‘parts’ rather than chapters, a method of presentation which seemed best suited to the fieldwork and comparative work. I begin with the perspectives and analysis of those that I term ‘elite policy-makers,’ followed by an analysis of ‘cultural workers’ and ‘ordinary urban dwellers.’ Although this order reflects broad relations of power, it should not be seen as making a linear assumption about the directions of power and influence. Each part begins with an introductory discussion. I then present analyses of Liverpool and Marseilles side-by-side. This allows the complexity of particular understandings, representations and experiences of culture and social relations to emerge in each site. The sections conclude with a summary section that draws out variations and similarities between the two cities. These three parts should not be read as independent from each other. By juxtaposing different perspectives, I attempt to tease out disconnections as well as overlaps within and between the different actors. It reflects an effort to produce an analysis of social life as ‘process,’ in a way that attempts to avoid artificial and rigid categories.

Part 1: Comparing elite understandings and governance of culture/s

In Part 1, official events where city elites talk about the European Capital of Culture programme serve as the starting point from where to investigate how elite decision-makers saw and deployed ‘culture’. The elite actors are situated in the built environment and social structures, and the city within geography and history, enabling me to move beyond narrative analysis. This section shows changes in urban governance over time. It examines the mechanics through which the ‘cultural turn’ in urban policy came to ground, affecting understandings and representations of social and cultural difference, and variously influencing opportunities for incorporation within city and cultural-making processes.

Part 2: Comparing culture workers in impoverished neighbourhoods

Culturally-inflected regeneration has faced much criticism for its role in gentrification and the displacement of certain groups from the city centre. At the same time, arts organisations or cultural projects are increasingly tasked to mitigate the effects of spatial or social marginalisation. Using extended case studies of two cultural projects, I analyse
the category of cultural workers, in order to draw out how this category was structured by understandings and experiences of class, race, gender, time and place. I then investigate how cultural work and cultural workers were affected by the increasing socio-spatial fragmentation of the city that was, in both cases, accentuated by the European Capital of Culture projects. I consider instances where cultural workers were agents of gentrification processes and, conversely, where they offered alternative visions and possibilities for cultural and urban development.

Part 3: Comparing urban cultures in everyday life

The final Part puts people and places often imagined as marginal from processes central to cultural and economic life, at the heart of the discussion. I trace the social networks of people loosely involved in projects associated with culturally-inflected urban development around the period of the European Capital of Culture project. Detailed descriptions of the changing built environment and elite place-marketing strategies are interwoven with everyday interactions in urban spaces and places. I tease out how people in weak positions of power struggle to create meaningful places and spaces in urban areas targeted by culturally-inflected urban development.

Ethical reflections

All the names of the individuals have been changed in this thesis and, apart from occasions when prior consent has been gained, I avoid detailed descriptions of people in order to keep anonymity. Nevertheless it is possible that people who are familiar with urban and cultural policy networks in Liverpool and Marseilles will recognise certain individuals. To reduce any possible harm, I have tried as much as possible to focus on the public role that people played.

Summary

This is not - could not be - a comprehensive analysis of all social and cultural relations in Liverpool and Marseilles; neither is it a definitive account of how urban transformation has affected everyday life in these two cities. Rather, it offers a partial yet ‘situated’ framework to explore comparatively how globe-spanning narratives of culturally-inflected urban transformation are intersected with locally-specific understandings and experiences of inequality and difference in two ‘downscale cities.’
One risk when focusing on two case studies is either of overstating variations, or overemphasising similarities. To avoid this possibility, detailed descriptions are provided of how, where, when and with whom I carried out the research. By making my own position and my work of representation in the development of the narrative explicit (Strathern, 2004, Smith 2000); readers are better able to critically examine, compare and contrast my narratives with their own knowledge of these and other cities, thus contributing to the development of a comparative urban research agenda.

In what follows I show how a number of similarities emerged in the ways in which social difference and cultural value were constituted at the intersection of everyday and abstract social spaces operating across many scales in both cities. Processes of marginalisation, displacement and ‘othering’ of impoverished urban dwellers are examined, often linked to strategies of urban repositioning and gentrification. However, variations emerge that were influenced by national political and ideological frames, local social histories and individual agency. By highlighting these, this thesis serves to nuance generalisations of globalisation literature and contributes to debates in literature exploring diversity and urban transformation in European cities. It is in noting local specificity, and the gaps between policy narratives and delivery, that it is possible to see when and how spaces for alternative, more inclusive, visions of culture emerge. As Gilroy (2004: 161) argued, describing the detailed unfolding of everyday relations that transcend dominant understandings of cultural or racial difference, “can contribute to a counter-history of cultural relations and influences from which a new understanding of multicultural Europe” may emerge.

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Part 1: Elite understandings and governance of culture/s

On comparing social situations

Two public events serve as windows through which to compare elite imaginaries, representations and organisation of ‘cultural value’ and socio-spatial relations in Liverpool and Marseilles. The Liverpool event took place in February 2010, and was organised as part of a European MA programme on European Urban Cultures. It involved a presentation by a Liverpool City Council representative of Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture project (locally referred to as ‘Liverpool 08’) to a group of approximately fifteen university students. The Marseilles event happened in October 2013, just as the year-long programme of Marseilles’ European Capital of Culture project (known as ‘Marseilles-Provence 2013’ or ‘MP2013’) was unfolding. This event was organised by members of a network of academics specialising in analysing the European Capital of Culture initiative. Spokespeople representing different public or semi-public institutions operating in Marseilles had been invited to make a contribution at the opening session. At both events urban decision-makers had been asked to talk about their city in relation to the European Capital of Culture project.

I draw here on the methods of situational analysis applied by the Manchester School of Social Anthropology (see for example Gluckman 2006 [1958]; Gluckman 1940; Clyde Mitchell 2006 [1982]). Using this approach, the narratives presented at the events and the events serve as openings through which to explore broader social structures in the cities. Analyses of official stories is intertwined with descriptions of particular actors and institutions, the urban landscape and ethnographic and historical insights built up over a number of years, providing a means to how the European Capital of Culture intersected with these historically-embedded processes of place marketing and place making. Specific attention is given to shifts in the political and ideological organisation of ‘culture’, ‘race’ and ‘class’ in both urban locations.

There are clear differences between the two events, for example in terms of: size, audience numbers, roles of the official spokespeople and the ‘temporality’ of the occasions. The Liverpool event took place two years after the European Capital of Culture year had ended, and the Marseilles event occurred during the Capital of Culture year itself. The conference in Marseilles occurred five years after the onset of the fiscal
and financial crisis in Europe and two years after the debut of political unrest in North Africa, a social phenomenon that significantly altered socio-spatial organisation of cultural policy in Marseilles. Yet, as these events are not being used as ‘vignettes’ or ‘apt illustrations’ of broader social patterns, such differences do not hinder this comparative analysis (Kapferer 2014). Indeed, as long as adequately highlighted, disparities and ‘atypicality’ in the social situations can offer significant analytical interest (Kapferer 2015).

Nonetheless, the events were chosen because they do share certain similarities. As with the European meeting with which I began the Introduction, both events hint at how academic study tours and conferences form an increased part of communication technologies that participate in the dissemination of urban policies and narratives of place in an increasingly inter-connected policy world (see McCann et al. 2011). By beginning with these ‘nodes’ in European circuits of policy-making and teasing out the connections – or not – with local social structures, I probe the extent to which there is a direct relation between ideas circulating in ‘Europe’ and understandings and experiences in the two cities. In other words, I interrogate how particular ‘European’ ideas, policies and performance of the European Capital of Culture affected locally-situated ‘elite’ understandings and organisations of place-making and branding.

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Liverpool: Cosmopolitanism in the world city/world in one city/global city

Setting the scene

Liverpool’s event was held in the city’s 18th century Town Hall. As asserted in a book on the city’s architecture, published and branded as part of the Capital of Culture programme (Sharples and Stonard 2008), the Town Hall is one of the oldest buildings in this part of the city that has since been branded Liverpool’s ‘commercial district.’ The exterior of the building was somewhat grimy with pollution; nonetheless, with its

18 This booklet is a clear example of how the cultural policy was harnessed by city boosters to market Liverpool as a desirable place in which to invest.
columns, dome and the doorman decked out in grey suit and tails, it offered an impressive ‘historic’ setting for the presentation. The surrounding streetscape comprised of a mix of large-scale 19th century financial and commercial offices, most of which now serve as international coffee shops, lunchtime restaurants and supermarkets. Various schemes have been introduced in an attempt to attract new business to the area, but the flush of ‘to-let’ signs attached to empty buildings reflect Liverpool’s current struggling economic condition.

On arriving, I noted a qualitative difference between this part of the city and ‘Liverpool One’, located just a hundred meters away. Liverpool One, formally opened in 2008 - Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture year - was a £1 billion privately-managed “shopping, residential and leisure district” developed by the municipality in the early 2000s as part of a wider strategy to transform Liverpool into a popular shopping destination.19 Billed as the biggest retail development in Europe, its creation had involved the destruction of 42 acres of the former 19th century cityscape. Reflecting broader trends towards the privatisation of public space, the scheme was developed and run under a 250-year lease to Grosvenor, the investment company of the Duke of Westminster, the largest property owner in the city. It is kept clean and ‘safe’ by a private security service and street cleaning team.

In 2010, plans were afoot to begin a £2 million, Central Government-funded redevelopment scheme in an effort to reduce disparities between the pristine, privately-managed shopping centre and the public space around the Town Hall. From 2011, the area was designated ‘business improvement district’ (BID) status, whereby business leaders clubbed together to manage and market this part of the city. It is a (private) form of urban governance that is emblematic of contemporary restructuring processes of the ‘entrepreneurial city’ (Jessop 2013 [1998]; Ward 2011).

The area around the Town Hall also felt qualitatively different to what has now been branded as the ‘visitor destinations’ or ‘quarters’, part of the development of the city’s tourist economy. For example, there is the newly-designated ‘museum quarter’, a suite of buildings built by Liverpool’s elite in the 19th century. This includes an art gallery,
city library, museum and the grandiose St George’s Hall built near the central railway station. These buildings had been renovated using European and national grants in the lead up to the Capital of Culture year.

Just 200 metres away from the Town Hall, the remodelled pier head represented another significant site in the recent reconfiguring of the appearance and appeal of Liverpool. One hundred years earlier, this area was one of the busiest and most advanced docks in the world. Merchants came from around the world to trade at the Liverpool stock exchange, and thousands of labourers of different nationalities and backgrounds unloaded salt, tobacco, sugar and other imported goods from across the British Empire (Milne [2006] 2008). In the 1970s, as part of painful processes of deindustrialisation of the city, associated with bitter labour disputes and racialised riots, the docks became obsolete and were abandoned. Since the 1980s, as part of a private-led, property-driven growth strategy, the redbrick warehouses have been transformed into a suite of museums, art galleries, bars and boutiques. The Merseyside Docks and Harbour Company is now owned by the Peel Group: a private real estate, media, transport and infrastructure investment company that has become perhaps the key player in Liverpool’s economic development. A new private arena and conference centre lines the waterfront, which, along with a large permanently installed Ferris wheel and the new terminal for cruise liners, symbolises the new consumer economy.

On arriving at the Town Hall, passing a number of white ‘business men’ wearing suits, I noted that I felt somewhat out of place in this part of the city, dressed like a ‘student’, in jeans and trainers. While seemingly anecdotal, such insights help indicate how material changes to the look of the city and urban governance have impacted on understandings of who and what belongs in Liverpool’s cityscape.

My experience conjured up memories of objections I had heard raised by black Liverpudlians who felt that the city centre remained a ‘white’ space, despite the significant presence of black people in the city for several generations (see Kelly 2011). As a case in point: in 2012, a black male street busker lodged a freedom of information request to Liverpool City Council asking the percentage of people involved in the Liverpool BID who were of a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background, and the proportion of black-owned businesses in the area. For certain urban dwellers, the dominant form of entrepreneurial, culturally-inflected urban governance is associated
with on-going exclusion of parts of the city’s population from mainstream spatial narratives and practices. This is part of the story that I tell below.

The event

I was greeted by a white, grey-haired doorman standing at the top of the Town Hall steps. With a friendly smile, a strong ‘Scouse’ accent and an unpretentious attitude which I associate with the majority of ‘working class’ people in this city; he directed me through the oak-panelled corridors to the Council Chambers where the presentation was due to take place. In the room a group of students, all white, from a range of EU countries had arrived and were making notes or taking photographs with mobile phones or cameras. With dazzling sunlight streaming through the stained-glass windows, lighting up the polished wooden benches, the room felt an important place.

The morning was structured to begin with an overview of the official version of Liverpool’s Capital of Culture year. Then, after a question and answer session and coffee in the official reception rooms of the Town Hall, a municipal town planner gave the group a tour of the ‘new’ city centre, which, it turned out, centred on Liverpool One.

At the front of the room, a City Council representative was setting up his PowerPoint presentation. A white British man in his early 50s, he was dressed in what I jotted down at the time as casual ‘corporate attire’. I noted that his dark suit and striped shirt, open at the collar, seemed more ‘City of London’ than ‘Liverpool City Council’. In a subsequent interview I learned this was not far from the case. The speaker told me that he had only worked for Liverpool City Council since 2005, when he was recruited to work for the Liverpool Culture Company; the semi-autonomous body set up to manage the European cultural policy in 2000. Previously, he had worked in London as a functionary in a government department under the Thatcher administration, before moving to the private sector.

I argue that the corporate-style dress, the market-focused emphasis of his presentation (supported by photographs, newspaper cuttings, quotes and statistics selected from a generic City Council PowerPoint presentation produced for events such as this) and the subsequent focus of the urban tour embody what key policy-makers described as “a new

managerial and political structure within Liverpool City Council” from the late 1980s (Parker and Garnell 2006: 294) and offers insights into the dominant frames for understanding and managing ‘culture’ in Liverpool in 2010.

**Telling the story of Liverpool 08**

The municipal representative had been asked to speak about the aims, implementation and impact of the European Capital of Culture on Liverpool to this group of MA students. In his emailed response to the MA coordinator, he offered instead to give an introductory talk that would “*tell the story*” (my emphasis) and then focus on the “*legacy*” of Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture project. The use of the direct article here is significant: implicitly, there is only one story to tell. This narrative device effectively omitted competing visions of the culture/s of both the city and the Capital of Culture project; including those presented in the 2003 bid document.

The speaker began by drawing the group’s attention to the municipal building in which we were sitting. He told the group it was constructed when Liverpool was “*a very important place*”. As was explicit in the title of the presentation – “*How we got our mojo back*” – this narrative drew on history in order to justify the efforts of city leaders to restore Liverpool - then the most ‘disadvantaged’ local authority in England - to its ‘natural’ position on the top table of international cities. He did not miss the opportunity to note that in the 18th century Liverpool had been more successful than Manchester, Liverpool’s historic rival, based 50km inland; as if to gain a point in a game of historical intercity ranking. In fact, for anybody with an awareness of political economy of the north-west of England, this historic comparison with Manchester highlights the divergence in these cities’ fortunes: for a number of years Manchester has become seen as the powerhouse for regional, and Liverpool as the poor relation; lagging behind in political, economic and cultural spheres (Dembski 2014).

That morning, the speaker structured his account historically in three broad periods: the 18th and 19th centuries, the 20th century up to the late 1980s, and the 1980s onwards. In itself this was not a new strategy. Like other urban areas, including Marseilles, Liverpool’s leaders have been involved in place-marketing exercises through fairs,

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21 I was invited to this meeting because I had met this MA coordinator at the University of Manchester. He had invited me along to show the Masters students another view of Liverpool in the afternoon.
expositions and branding since the turn of the 20th century, and descriptions of the past have often featured in such promotional exercises (Wilks-Heeg 2003). The European Capital of Culture bid writers likewise used an historical framework when they developed a narrative of the city in the early 2000s.

Below I compare how history was described by the municipal spokesperson in 2010 with variations in narratives used by bid writers in 2003. This helps clarify shifts in present-day understandings and organisation of culture and social relations as this European Capital of Culture project came to ground (Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2015). First though, I sketch out how Liverpool’s history has been evoked in the past by urban elites, allowing me to nuance how representations and organisation of social difference has changed over a longer timescale, in relation to Liverpool’s shifting location in the world (see Grillo 2000).

**Historicising histories of Liverpool**

As outlined in the Introduction, Liverpool had little ‘cultural capital’ in the 19th and early 20th centuries, despite its dominant position in the international economy as a major port of the empire. For many of the country’s elite, Liverpool was a provincial and/or foreign place, associated with a visible presence of seaman from around the world (Brown 2005). During the Victorian era, certain civic leaders attempted to construct new artistic and architectural narratives and communication strategies to improve Liverpool’s cultural and social ranking within local and national imaginaries. The imposing neoclassic buildings that now house the city’s museums and art galleries offer examples of such material and symbolic spatial practices. Official events held to mark the 600th anniversary of the royal granting of borough status to the small fishing village of Liverpool in 1907 offer more insight into the tensions and contradictions in the ways in which the impoverished city dwellers were included in official place marketing accounts at the time.  

As part of elite place marketing efforts to promote Liverpool’s “glory” and celebrate the “vigour and enterprise” of its leaders (Muir 1907: para 7.10), Ramsay Muir, a historian at the local university, was tasked to write the city’s official history. Of note here are the

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22 As I describe in Part 2, I would partake in celebrations to mark the 700th anniversary of the city in 2007, that formed part of the lead up to Liverpool European Capital of Culture year.
conflicting ways in which social difference was described and valued. On the one hand, Muir, along with other commentators at the time (see also Belchem 2000), proudly asserted that few cities in the world were more cosmopolitan. At this historical conjuncture of British colonial expansion, the city’s diversity was used as a marker of Liverpool’s position within world-spanning networks. On the other hand, racialised and class-riven understandings of urban social relations are visible in subsequent paragraphs. For example, Muir warned readers that:

“this amazingly polyglot and cosmopolitan population, consisting to a considerable extent of races which are backward in many ways, and maintaining itself largely by unskilled labour, vastly increases the difficulty of securing and maintaining the decencies of life” (Muir 1907: 39).

For urban elites, the presence of racialised groups were seen as holding back efforts to transform both the reputation and quality of life in the city (Brown 2005), as pride in the markers of the city’s ‘world-city’ status was cut through by politics of class and empire (Lentin 2014).

Patterns of symbolic and material exclusions of racialised bodies from the city were visible in the official pageant to celebrate the city’s anniversary. In this staged representation of Liverpool, some recognition was accorded to the presence of people of Celtic background (despite on-going discrimination against Irish Catholics, which I discuss more in Part 3). Conversely, the presence and contributions of people of West African, Caribbean, Chinese and Indian backgrounds residing in Liverpool were invisible, in what Belchem (2000b) describes as an effort to present Liverpool as an ‘English’ (white) imperial city.

Two world wars and the global depression shook the city’s economic foundations in the early part of the 20th century. This was the case for other cities around the world; but Liverpool’s economy was particularly badly affected. The worldwide slump in trade during the inter-war years decimated port-based activities that monopolised the urban economy. In the absence of Central Government support for the local economy and growing social problems - as unemployment climbed above the national average (Meegan 2003) - city leaders adopted what now seems very ‘21st century’ methods to attract capital. These included the investment in an airport to the south of the city and
the establishment of the Liverpool Organisation, a city marketing agency set up to attract outside investment (Wilks-Heeg 2003).

At this historical moment, city marketing literature relied on nostalgic narratives of Liverpool’s former glory in order to deflect attention from the city’s economic and social predicaments, and to compete with other regional cities such as Birmingham or Manchester. Again, narratives extolled the virtues of Liverpool as the port of the colonies and dwelt on the ‘Liverpudlian’ characteristics of resilience, enterprise and adaptability (Belchem 2000b). In both the symbolic and material spatial organisation of the city, black and other racialised minorities were excluded from dominant city imaginaries. Institutionalised and everyday racism led to the clustering of black and other racialised people in the city around the docks or in what is now called Liverpool 8 or Granby and Toxteth (Belchem 2014).

Shifts in official representations of the city occurred during the early decades after the Second World War, although social relations were still strongly racialised via a colonial vision of the world (Belchem 2014). The economy continued its downward spiral but the use of ‘historic time’ and narratives of empire to market the city waned. Following trends in the UK, town planners embarked on a radically modern redesign of the city, enthusiastically knocking down what would now be considered ‘heritage buildings’ in order to construct a modernist vision of the future. Such trends were made possible by the availability of Central Government funding and broader regional development strategies during the welfare state capitalism of the post-war years.

Invocation of the city’s history re-emerged in the narratives of urban planners during the period of urban development in the 1980s, in the absence of a significant regional industrial policy. Echoing strategies of capital accumulation through urban revaluation visible throughout the world at this time (Harvey 1989), history had become “Liverpool’s main ‘trade’ and source of attraction, the last hope for a city blighted by

23 Grassroots, class-based, protests in the form of industrial action provoked by huge lay-offs, as well as struggles for recognition and racial equality influenced by the civil rights movement in the USA, also shaped understandings and experiences of socio-spatial relations. I discuss this below.

24 It is noteworthy that urban planners in Marseilles are exhibiting similar traits today, describing how they intend to pull down any trace of the city’s industrial past in order to build the ideal type ‘European’ business district imagined as desired by multinationals and entrepreneurs (see Burlaud (2015)). Similar patterns of ignoring the past and highlighting the ‘modern’ are in evidence in Manchester.
post-industrial collapse and now ill-placed geographically…for trade with European partners” (Belchem 2000a).

As stated, this overview helps contextualise descriptions of Liverpool’s past presented in 2010. Before considering the latter, I want to emphasise that critical voices in the city (including black activists, local historians and the city centre institutions such the Liverpool International Slavery Museum) have long contended that elite, official (white, male, Western) versions of Liverpool’s history have a lengthy tradition of rendering invisible forms of inequality including racial and class divisions. They also point to historic marginalisation of impoverished and racialised bodies from the central spaces and symbolic realms of the city, in a city described in the 1980s as practicing “its own unique brand of apartheid” (Belchem 2000; Brown 2005; Sengupta 1998: np).

**Representations of culture and social relations in 2010**

In his presentation of Liverpool, the speaker began by referring to the Town Hall to evoke the “innovative” town Councillors in the early 18th century, described as having facilitated the commercial success of Liverpool’s merchants. He went on to describe the “entrepreneurial” capitalists of the city in the 19th century, presented as having propelled Liverpool to its prominent position as “the second city of empire” a century later.

Conforming to the criticisms made above, impoverished and racialised bodies were largely absent from his account. The dominant role of Liverpool in the transatlantic slave trade in the mid-eighteenth century, and part this played in the city’s global prominence and impressive architecture was omitted. The students were not told about the extreme inequality and socio-spatial polarisation that emerged in Liverpool during the imperial period, notably of Irish Catholic migrants who were treated as ‘barbarians’ and forced to live in dire poverty around the docks and to the north of the city (Engels 1987 [1844]). Neither were they told about the racism faced by colonial workers from across the British empire, who toiled on Liverpool-registered ships with lower wages

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25 In what follows, I draw on Jessop’s (2013 [1997]: np) study of the narrative devices used to promote “entrepreneurial cities” strategies. This framework works well with the way in which selective presentations of the economic, political and social conditions were used to justify the dominant market-led approach to the European Capital of Culture.

26 For example, when the Town Hall was built nearly all members of the Liverpool Council holding office were involved in the slave trade in one form or other (Williams 1944).
and worse working conditions than their fellow white British sailors. Nor was the sectarianism that was provoked by the British presence in Northern Ireland discussed. No allusions were made to the trans-local and transnational migration that made Liverpool’s growth possible, or to the contributions made by those migrants who had settled in the city for more than two centuries. In short, in line with many urban development strategies built on local ‘heritage,’ urban conflict and inequality were written out of the story (Zukin 1995).

Seven years earlier, however, a different account of social relations in the city was produced by the bid writers involved in the European Capital of Culture application for Liverpool.

The Liverpool 08 bid: a different tale of Liverpool

In the bid documents justifying Liverpool’s selection, the city’s links with slavery and migration were explicitly foregrounded. The city’s colonial foundations were emphasised and historical patterns of migration evoked to depict Liverpool as a diverse, cosmopolitan place. They asserted that:

“The cultural map of Liverpool is grounded in the experiences of traditionally under-represented groups and individuals. As a port [Liverpool] acted as a magnet for social migration, as a focus for the slave trade and a place of settlement for different communities, beginning with the Irish, then the Chinese, West Africans, seamen from many countries, in particular Somalia and the Yemen and more recently refugees and asylum seekers have come here for sanctuary. It has a cultural identity which is both local and international. The World in One City.”

(LCC 2003: 101, original emphasis)

Clearly bid authors were responding to the conditions of grant that made promotions of diversity an essential aspect of winning this European competition. What is of interest here are the mechanisms by which the language circulating within supranational and national circuits promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue came to ground in a city that had, only a decade before, been described in a damning report as “uniquely racist” (Belchem 2014; Sengupta 1998). The subsequent section of the speaker’s presentation gives crucial insights into how shifting ideological frames and forms of
urban governance led to the brief emergence of narratives of inclusion found in the bid, as well as why celebrations of diversity withered away from elite narratives.

Narrating the ‘tough times’

Following the introduction of Liverpool’s ‘world-city’ status in the Georgian and Victorian eras, the City Council speaker moved forward in history to introduce the “tough times” in the 20th century. A number of reasons were given for Liverpool’s difficulties.

i. The economic argument: The inevitable decline

The first reason given was that this was an inevitable outcome of the restructuring of the global political economy. Using a series of bullet points on a slide, factors affecting Liverpool’s post-war problems were described. These included: the break-up of the British Empire, a shift in the balance of UK trade from America to Europe and the relocation of the epicentre of the UK economy to south of England, repositioning Liverpool “on the wrong side of the country”. Then, in terms that resonated with many interviews with urban leaders, he drew on personal experience to add coherence to his narrative of a city he described as “dying”, “failing”. After describing the massive job losses on the docks (from 40,000 to around 400 in 20 years), he told how he had been unable to find work in this failing city, so had to relocate to London. According to Jessop (2013 [1997]), such personal accounts of economic exclusion following the crisis of the post-war mode of growth have become a common tactic in justifying ‘entrepreneurial city’ strategies.

This overarching narrative does describe significant structural causes of Liverpool’s economic difficulties. Yet, there is a definite ideological bent, most evident in the absence of any reference to the role of the Conservative Thatcher-led government in the city’s decline. Indeed, more than once, the group was told that Thatcher’s government was “non-interventionist”.

This was not at all the case. In different ways the Thatcher government had been intervening directly in political, economic, social and cultural spheres in Liverpool since
elected in 1979. For example, huge cuts to local authority budgets brought in under the Thatcher government disproportionately affected large (broadly Labour-voting) cities like Liverpool that were faced with having to come with a drastically-depleted economic and fiscal base, crumbling infrastructure and mounting social costs (Amin 2006; Parkinson 1985). Moreover, Thatcher’s political project of downsizing public services proved especially calamitous in a city like Liverpool where the public sector was the major employer. Furthermore, while Britain’s membership of the European Economic Community did result into a shift in the national balance of trade to South-Central England, this was directly linked to national government policy, and compounded by the disbanding of any regional development policy (Amin 2006). Withdrawal of subsidies to regional industries led to a massive withdrawal of private sector investment in Merseyside. Employment fell by 23 percent between 1981-1991 (59,000 jobs), causing considerable hardship and leading to a population exodus. Sixty thousand people left the city resulting in a decline in the population of 40 percent between 1960 and 1990 (Meegan 2003).

Liverpool’s failure was presented as being an inevitable consequence of globalisation (see Massey 2005), yet looking across the Channel, it is apparent that other approaches were possible. The UK government abandoned regional industrial policy; in West Germany regional policies were constitutionally mandated to support social justice, as well as efficient industrial production and support for the wider national economy (Amin 2006; Bachtler and Turok 2013). And, as will be discussed below, France attempted to introduce a regional policy to rebalance the national economy, with the state and regional authorities continuing to play a significant role in local economic policy.

ii. The moral political argument: a city administration that was political bankrupt

The second reason given by the speaker for Liverpool’s downturn was an “economically and politically bankrupt” local administration and - illustrative of the dominance of entrepreneurial ‘common-sense’ in the city - what the speaker described as its poor relations with the private sector.

27 At the time, critical theorists identified this strategy as a deliberate assault on socialist municipalities, and part of a broader neoliberal ideological attack on the political settlement of the post-war years (Hall 1987).
Few would dispute that Liverpool suffered from weak political leadership in the 1970s and 80s (Parkinson 1985). The unstable Conservative-Liberal coalition proved at best inadequate and at worst negligent in dealing with the city’s accruing social and economic problems (Meegan 2003). Across the board, the city economy and services for ordinary people continued to deteriorate (Parkinson 1985). Some of these merit listing in order to understand contemporary organisations of social-space.

For example, there was some investment in housing, social and recreational services in impoverished neighbourhoods, funded by short-term, Central Government funded, area-based development schemes in the 1960s and 70s. However, City Council housing officials placed white families in the new housing estates on the outskirts of the city and located black residents in the Liverpool 8 postcode area in practices defined as being “systematically racist” (Sengupta 1998: np). Discrimination in the allocation of public sector work also contributed to racialised segregation in a city where visible minorities have long been significantly under-represented in public employment (Brown 2005).

However in the presentation in 2010, the charges of political and economic bankruptcy were overtly linked to the Labour-led municipality of 1983-1987; the bête-noir of the Thatcher government and right-wing media.

The socialist municipality had come to power after a campaign to stand up to the sweeping cuts introduced by Thatcher’s government, who were broadly seen as having abandoned the city (Frost and North 2013). The Labour-led municipality joined other socialist municipalities across the country, deliberately opposing Central Government budget cuts and market-led reforms. In Liverpool’s case, the socialist municipality was led by a small cohort of ‘Militant’ or ‘Trotskyist’ left-wingers, who took a class-based approach to urban policy that focused on investing in the provision of collective housing, recreational and associated environmental improvements in the most deprived parts of the city, and refused to engage with neoliberal urban policies being imposed on the city by Central Government (see below).  

28 This administration was initially hugely popular. Tensions quickly emerged, however, because the municipality’s class-based focus on impoverished areas ignored questions of race and identity, the arts, volunteer and community groups and the private sector (Frost and North 2013; Locente 1995). I discuss the implications of these policies in terms of understandings and organisations of culture and social relations below.
The language that the speaker used about Liverpool at this time as “failing” or “dying” echoed depictions of Liverpool that circulated widely in the national sphere in the 1980s. Liverpool and its people began to be referred to in terms of ‘moral failure’. For example, the city was seen as:

“strike-bound, bankrupt, run-down, wasted, hopeless and run by loony left-wingers” (Murden, 1992 in Boland 2008: 360).

Or, as a much-cited article in the Daily Mirror in 1982 put it:

“They should build a fence around [Liverpool] and charge admission. For sadly, it has become a ‘showcase’ of everything that has gone wrong in Britain’s major cities” (cited in Wilks-Heeg 2003: 44).

Other municipal socialist administrations faced similar attacks. Yet, the extreme violence with which Liverpool was represented in the 1970s and 1980s - and repeated here – and the denial of the impact of Thatcher’s neoliberal agenda on the city, was regularly used to justify particularly heavy-handed intervention from the Thatcher government in the urban governance of the city. These narrative practices contributed to a growing acceptance for market-focused, ‘business-friendly’ solutions for this city considered incapable of governing itself (Wilks-Heeg 2003; Boland 2008).

One more piece of the puzzle needs to be added to gain a picture of shifts in understandings and organisations of culturally-inflected urban development. For in the early 1980s, the Thatcher government’s intervention in Liverpool was presented as a means of installing the government’s law and order agenda in unruly (black) inner-city areas following the black-led civil unrest in Liverpool in 1981 (see Morgan 2015). A nuanced version of this account was used in the 2010 presentation. The speaker who described Thatcher’s involvement and subsequent urban regeneration in the city as provoked by ‘unacceptable’ “multi-ethnic riots”.

iii. Socio-cultural argument: The “multi-ethnic riots”

The MA students were told that the government’s hand had been forced by the “multi-ethnic riots” in the “long hot summer” of 1981, which “she could not accept”. During the eight years that I lived and worked in the city, I had never heard the riots described as “multi-ethnic”; this language offers some insights into the changing modes of
governance in the city. Before I explore this, it is worth contextualising the riots which continue to frame socio-spatial relations within and beyond the city.

The riots, and urban narratives of socio-spatial difference

In July of 1981, a young black man was subjected to an aggressive stop-and-search by Merseyside Police in ‘Liverpool 8’ or ‘Toxteth’, a post-code area and social space just to the south of the city centre, where most visible minorities in the city resided. Merseyside Police had a long track record for harassing young people, and especially young black people, in this part of the city (Belchem 2014: 256). The incident sparked the arrest of another black man, which provoked intense rioting. In response, Central Government sanctioned the use of tear gas, for the first time on mainland Britain (Belchem 2014).

One narrative, perpetuated in the national media, presents the events as the ‘Toxteth riots’ (with ‘Toxteth’ used as a euphemism for race). This account racialises the residents and the area in which they live. It ignores the fact that copycat riots took place around the city, and renders the struggle alien to the city (Uluku 2003; Brown 2005). A similar narrative stigmatised the whole city with criminalised and racialised behaviour.

Alternative, other accounts underline that the riots took place in a context of growing racism, when post-colonialism and anti-racist struggles were emerging across the UK and Europe (Balibar 2012; Hall 1987). In these versions, the disturbances are differentiated from other riots against racial oppression and discrimination that have occurred in Liverpool periodically throughout the 20th century. Greater focus is placed on the national recession of 1979-1981, growing unemployment (the disturbances took place in a part of the city with some of the highest unemployment rates in the country) and a mounting assault on the Thatcher government’s policy on welfare benefits. The context of avid racial discrimination in the city is acknowledged, but the participation of local white people in the riots is highlighted. Parkinson (1985: 15), for example, describes the violence as an uprising of “the dispossessed of the inner city” in a “poor people’s revolt” against authority.

Ethnicisation of race following “the riots”

Following the riots, a plethora of reports were commissioned both nationally and locally. It was in this context that Liverpool was described as “the most disturbing case
of racial disadvantage in the United Kingdom” (Fifth Report of the Home Affairs Committee 1980-81, cited in Belchem 2014: 1). Following the national unrest of 1981, Central Government shifted the parameters for intervening in inner-cities, introducing new structures and institutions. In Liverpool’s case, this involved a Merseyside Task Force, a Minister for Merseyside and resources channelled through an urban development corporation, funded by diverting funds from the local authority.

From this period, the language of ethnicity gradually came to replace the language of race when describing social disadvantage in the UK. New Central Government grants were introduced to finance “ethnic projects” in impoverished inner-city areas (Bourne 2013: np). In Liverpool, the ethnicisation of social relations was rejected by a number of vocal, predominately Liverpool 8-based activists, many involved in anti-racist politics since the 1960s (Brown 2005). Inspired by the civil rights and the Black Power movements in America, activists had mobilised around the language of blackness and race (Brown 2005). Because of a slight shift in power relations following the riots, they had been able to influence local representations of social relations to a certain degree. As opposed to elsewhere in the country, the terms ‘Black and Racial Minority’ (BRM) instead of the category of Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) was used by the municipality up until the early 2000s.

The influence of the anti-racist campaigners over how social difference was conceived and organised declined, however, in relation to a growth in urban regeneration programmes in the 1990s. As Central government and, later, EU monies poured in, there was a shift from direct representation to ‘community consultation’ as civil servants and intermediaries in the race relations/social cohesion industry took over in ways that kept black voices from political, economic, social and cultural fields of power in the city (Clay 2008). This affected the development of understandings and representations of culture during Liverpool 08.29

29 It is worth noting that responses by urban leaders in Liverpool focused on Toxteth or Liverpool 8, in ways that ignored social difference elsewhere and ‘whitens’ the rest of the city.
The ideological crusade of urban regeneration in a ‘wounded city’

A key point to draw from this middle section of the speaker’s presentation is that Liverpool was described as a ‘city in crisis’. Against this background, the speaker introduced national and EU urban ‘regeneration’ schemes that were presented as having “saved” the city. I came across this view regularly in interviews with elite urban decision-makers. In the presentation, and the bid narrative written seven years before, Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture project was described as a continuation of the national and European urban ‘regeneration’ programmes that began in the 1980s.

However ‘urban regeneration’ should not be taken as politically neutral. The term gained hold in urban policy under the Thatcher government (Jones and Evans 2003). With its underlying associations with Judaeo-Christian notions of ‘rebirth’, Jones and Evans (2003: 2) assert that:

“…regeneration – as opposed to mere ‘redevelopment’ – became akin to a moral crusade, rescuing not only the economy but also the soul of the nation. The phrase also functions as a biological metaphor, with run-down areas seen as sores or cancers requiring regeneration activity to heal the body of the city”.

As Schneider and Susser (2003) argue, representing the body politic of the city as sick or wounded has often served to legitimise market-led, ‘external’ solutions, changing the political culture of the city and relations of power (Massey 1991). This was clearly the case for Liverpool.

The most striking example of the imposition of a market-led agenda in the city by Central Government occurred in September 1979, when it announced the establishment of the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC), a private sector-led quango. This occurred without prior notification to the municipality or County Council, both of which had been developing plans for the city’s waterfront for a number of years (Harding

30 According to one interviewee, descriptions of Liverpool’s economic misfortunes in the 20th century were particularly stressed in presentations to ‘European’ audiences. While Liverpool was a well-recognised symbol of urban crisis in a UK context, a framing that periodically resurfaces in the national media whenever bad news takes place in the city (Brown 2005), this reputation does not always extend across the Channel. In order to reinforce the extent of the ‘success’ that had been achieved by Liverpool’s regeneration in an EU context, city representatives would stress the city’s tough times. This illustrates nicely how participating in ‘European’ social fields differentially affected the ways in which stories about the city were recounted.
1992; Parkinson 1985). Overriding ‘local’ plans, the quango pushed for a private-led development, focusing on property, retail and tourism; largely ignoring impoverished urban dwellers.\textsuperscript{31} The quango was dissolved in 1996, but as I show below, its legacy continues in present-day forms of culturally-inflected urban development.

Following the dismissal of the militant Labour party in 1987, which occurred alongside the Thatcher government winning its third election, Central Government negotiated with the new Labour administration, attaching new conditions to urban regeneration funding (Cocks 2012). The local authority was told that ‘economic’ rather than ‘social’ development had to be the priority (as if particular forms of economic development did not shape social relations; and vice-versa). Liverpool’s position at the bottom of the economic table, and the municipality’s poor reputation for being able to deliver a coherent survival strategy, meant city leaders had little room to negotiate (Parkinson 1985; Savitch and Kantor 2002).

In the absence of alternatives, urban leaders became increasingly pragmatic about bidding for anything going, even though it meant marginalising the role and position of the local authority (Cocks 2012). There was a growing acceptance by the more moderate Labour administration and third sector, private and faith-based organisations, that there was ‘no alternative’ to the neoliberal model of development in general. Moreover, as the most impoverished local authority in the country, Liverpool had become seen as an urban guinea pig for every area-based urban development initiative going (Couch 2008; Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004), with policy-makers matter-of-factly carving up the city in order to meet grant criteria. One stakeholder involved in these processes described how this worked:

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[The assistant Chief Executive was] standing in front of us all, [with a] bloody big map of the city centre, saying: ‘We’ve got this regeneration programme here, this regeneration programme here, that general improvement area.’ He said: ‘You see this big white bit, nobody’s ever done anything with that, so we’ll call that City Centre East and make it our City Challenge programme’”.
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\textsuperscript{31}The socialist municipality of 1983-1987 refused to fill a seat on the Board of the Merseyside Development Council (Meegan 2003; Savitch and Kantor 2002).
As the case study in Part 2 illustrates in detail, each of these “bits” were managed by separate agencies, working to their own timeframes and responsible to different layers of government. This resulted in significant fragmentation in the ways in which different parts of the city were organised, talked about and understood, again, leading to variations in the management and representation of social and cultural difference.

Liverpool and Europe

Being daubed the regeneration capital of the UK, at a time when there was a moral attack on a welfare and government ‘hand-outs’, cast Liverpool as the ‘benefit-dependent scrounger of the country’ and ‘unable to stand on its own two feet’.32 This subordinate status was one reason that, for Liverpool, and other northern industrial cities in the UK, ‘Europe,’ or the developing EU became so significant in local strategies to upscale in the 1990s.33

Following the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund in 1975, both Liverpool and the wider Merseyside region had become eligible for European Community Objective Two grants. For policy-makers in Liverpool, together with other UK cities that suffered the severe budget cuts of the 1980s, European Structural Funds offered a means to compete for public resources beyond the nation-state; to ‘jump scale’ in ways that would result in territorial restructuring and bring a certain pride in the entrepreneurial flair of the urban leaders (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999).34 By the end of the decade, as the city continued its economic downturn, policy-makers noted that Liverpool met the criteria for EU ‘Objective One’ Structural Funds (Cocks 2012). Objective One were earmarked for the poorest regions of the EU (those regions with less than 75 percent of the average European GDP), and conceived of as supporting new

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32 For comparisons with Greece in 2015 Europe, see Green, S in Skeggs (2015: 218).
33 It is worth noting here that policy-makers that I spoke to in 2012 continued to express deep sensitivity about the way Liverpool’s reputation in the national sphere continued to be stigmatised by politics from the 1980s. Significantly, unlike France, where civil servants were often relocated around the country, most of the policy-makers I interviewed in Liverpool were born in the area.
34 Marseilles would also receive European funding. However, there are variations in the way in which ‘Europe’ materialised in the two cities, as I discuss in the Marseilles section of this part of the thesis.
member states based in south-east Europe (Cocks 2012). Yet in 1993, challenging ideas of the spatial organisation of poverty in Europe, Merseyside was designated an ‘Objective One’ zone. This status would bring over £1,25 billion of European and UK Central Government funding to the city-region between 1994 and 1999, changing the urban landscape and contributing to a transformation of governance structures and understandings of social relations.

Money poured in, funding infrastructure projects such as the airport, the redevelopment of the waterfront and investments in the arts and culture scene. New forms of ‘partnership working’ developed between public, semi-public, private and third sector organisations across the Merseyside sub-region and extending to Brussels (Meegan 2003). Employment opportunities for consultants and private sector workers mushroomed, particularly in the ‘social inclusion’ industry. As projects were monitored on the extent to which they reached ‘BME groups’, the language of ethnicity became more widespread. Gradually, as across Europe, structural questions of class, unemployment, dispossession and race were reformulated as crises of culture or identity (Balibar 2012).

**Narrating culturally-led urban development**

The final part of the presentation introduced the European Capital of Culture project, which was depicted as “rocket fuel for urban regeneration” and the “golden thread of urban regeneration”. Before probing what ‘culture’ meant in this context, some historic background is required to understand how culture came to ground in a city where local authorities had generally been averse to investing resources in arts and cultural matters (O’Brien 2010).

**The “golden thread of regeneration” in a city reluctant to invest in culture**

Up until the mid-20th century, there was no real municipal cultural policy in Liverpool (Cohen 2007). In the 1980s, other socialist municipalities such as London, Sheffield and the West-Midlands had begun to explore new economic models in opposition to both

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35 When this policy was originally conceived, it was intended for impoverished regions to the south and east of Europe. Liverpool was the first urban area in West Europe to apply for and receive the award.

36 Similar processes occurred in state responses to the riots in the banlieues of French cities in 2005, Balibar (2012 [2010]).
the monetarism of Thatcherism and the largely discredited model of what was now seen as moribund forms of Keynesian corporatism (Peck 2011). Policy-makers in these administrations had started to experiment with a new approach to arts and culture, with a deliberate objective to democratise culture and broaden access to popular, vernacular, working class culture (Peck 2011: 46-47). By contrast, the militant Liverpool administration of 1983-1987 deliberately ignored the arts and culture sector (Lorente 1995). Thus, the principle culturally-inflected development activities taking place in the city were funded by the regional arm of the Arts Council of Great Britain, set up to promote artistic enterprises in the post-war period, and, following its establishment in 1974, until it was disbanded by the Conservative Central Government in 1986, the Merseyside County Council also funded local arts production. Cultural and leisure-based industries were included in the plans for the restructuring of the Albert Docks led by Merseyside Development Corporation.

There was a mood change in Liverpool in 1987. The moderate Labour administration of the city had signed up to the rhetoric of the role of cultural and urban development. In this they were not only influenced by policies seen in other UK and US cities but also influenced by the criteria of ‘Objective One’ funding, which included a budget line to make ‘creative city’ policies a driver of economic growth (Cohen 2007). Various urban decision-makers at different scales commissioned external consultants involved in European and transnational cultural policy circles to produce reports and publications about the role of the arts on the Merseyside economy. This resulted in the management of culture and the arts being located under the city’s urban development portfolio (Bianchini and Parkinson 1993). ‘Culture’ was assigned a role as an economic tool closely aligned with city centre development and tourism. There was little local ownership of the cultural policy sphere, however. In a trend that was to be repeated in relation to the European Capital of Culture bid, once the consultants had moved on local authority interest in culture waned (Bianchini and Parkinson 1993).

In 1997 the country was awash with the ‘third way’ optimism of the recently elected ‘New’ Labour party (Connolly 2013). The New Labour administration was completely enamoured with the concept of ‘culture’, as manifest in a sheaf of policy documents that were brought out, reflecting a belief that ‘culture’ could be a cure-all for urban
problems.\textsuperscript{37} The national governmental model merged culture with ‘art’ as a means to bridge the tensions between social justice/economic development and city centre renaissance/impoverished neighbourhoods (Connolly 2013).

In 1998, the Liberal Democrats took control of Liverpool City Council. In certain ways, the Liverpool leadership would prove to be “more New Labour than New Labour” (Meegan 2003), at least, in terms of their belief in the role of the market in urban policy. There was a deliberate strategy to introduce a more managerial and business focus to what they designated as ‘Liverpool PLC’ (ibid.). It was against this backdrop that the city leadership decided to bid to become European Capital of Culture. The name of the body set up to oversee the bid underlines the entrepreneurial focus that dominated this administration, a philosophy clearly adhered to by the speaker who described his mission as to ensure that:

“Liverpool capitalised on the economic benefits of its year as European Capital of Culture”.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{International experts and the re-imagining of Liverpool}

As with the cultural policy strategy of the late 1980s, there was little Council leadership of cultural content, and the process of developing the Capital of Culture bid was subcontracted to various experts and consultants (O’Brien 2010). The team was headed up by Sir Bob Scott, a white, middle class man based in London. With his degree from Oxbridge and a career in business, Scott was the epitome of the British cultural elite at the turn of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century; an elite which was increasingly influenced by businessmen and financiers (Griffiths et al. 2008). Scott was chosen not for his reputation as a ‘cultural’ policy guru - there was seemingly little interest in this from the leaders of Liverpool Council - but for his skills as an international ‘showman.’\textsuperscript{39} He had connections with national and international networks (as a member of the International Olympic Committee, as well being on a number of national and regional cultural boards), and under his leadership came the successful bid for the Manchester


\textsuperscript{38} Taken from a professional biographical statement presented when attending a European conference in 2011.

\textsuperscript{39} LI9
commonwealth games. Pragmatic and professional, people in the arts sector described him as being focused on winning the bid rather than the artistic content per se (O’Brien 2011).

For comparative purposes it is worth noting that, very differently to Marseilles, the bid was developed in consultation with the leader of the Council, the Council’s chief executive, Council employees, consultants, academics and local, regional and international cultural professionals (O’Brien 2010). Particular aspects, such as the ‘international’ dimension were outsourced to experts closely associated with the creative city literature, who were responsible for promoting the social and economic value of migration and cultural diversity (see for example, Landry and Wood 2008; Landry and Bianchini 1995).  

Given the city’s downscale reputation in political, economic, social and cultural terms, a coherent narrative was required that could rally public and private support within local, national and European circles. In light of the new European guidelines for the project (see Introduction), the bid writers came up with a story that stressed the need for economic and social regeneration. For the first time in Liverpool’s history of place marketing, bid writers positioned the city as a site of alternative, ‘popular’ everyday culture, in opposition to Western canonical cultural production and foregrounded the city’s (historic) cosmopolitanism (Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004).  

Yet compared to other industrial districts of the UK; such as Manchester, Birmingham or Leicester (and also compared to Marseilles), Liverpool’s population in the early 2000s was visibly less ‘diverse’ (Belchem 2014). Unlike other cities that had experienced major inward migration from former colonies, Liverpool had lost half its populace in seven decades during the “tough times” of the 20th century (reducing from 846,101 in 1931 to 439,000 in 2000 (Meegan 2003)). There was some in-migration during the 1950s, including Irish and Caribbean labour migration, but as a commentator noted at the time:

\[40\] LI24
\[41\] Here it is important to note that, in different ways, all the competing British cities emphasised cultural diversity (Glancey 2003).
“for very clear reasons of economy and common sense – first generation immigrants are not to be found in our community. Even the Irish have found their way south in search of employment”. (Archbishop Worlock, cited in Belchem 2014: 255)

To justify their descriptions of the city’s cultural diversity, the bid writers drew on historic migration flows to justify a narrative that enabled Liverpool to position itself vis-à-vis other ‘diverse’ cities in the UK:

“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)

The second most cosmopolitan community in Britain?

Using a particular temporal and spatial lens, there is some justification in this claim of cosmopolitanism. As Brown’s (2001; 2005) research among black Liverpudlians living in Liverpool 8/Toxteth illustrates, many ordinary Liverpool dwellers who were associated with Liverpool’s seafaring past would use the notion of cosmopolitanism to evoke an era when sailors of all nationalities resided side-by-side. In these stories, international seamen settled temporarily or permanently in particular neighbourhoods of the city, some marrying English, Irish or Scottish women and settling down to make a home in the city. Yet, as Brown (2001:5) writes:

“Although Liverpool, writ large, was an international seaport city, it was not true that the city as a whole was this cosmopolitan. Anything but. Downtown Liverpool was off limits to Blacks, who would be routinely terrorized for trespassing there”.

Refugees and asylum seekers welcome?

The one exception to the historicising of migration and diversity was the reference in the bid to “more recent asylum seekers and refugees” (LCC 2003: 101). This echoes narratives on immigration and diversity across the country which were strongly informed by the shifting patterns of international migration, and changes in European and UK immigration policy at the turn of the century. As legal routes into ‘fortress Europe’ were becoming increasingly difficult, growing numbers of people wishing to
migrate to the UK for varying reasons would claim asylum on arrival in the country, mainly in the south of England. Tensions emerged as a small number of local authorities became responsible for dealing with the new migrants (tensions that were reflected, refracted and amplified in the national media). In response to this, Central Government introduced a new system to disperse those seeking asylum around the country to areas with surplus inexpensive housing (Spicer 2008). Liverpool was one such area.

By focusing on claims for political asylum, the bid aligned narratives of local social relations to national and European concerns about managing and integrating migrants and national security. Bid writers described “challenges [of] … the implications of a mix of cultural identities” (LCC 2003: 201) in ways that rendered ethnic, religious or national difference a policy challenge, ignoring the multiple roles of migrants within the construction and repositioning of the city. As illustrated below, in different ways these elite narratives both reflected and shaped the organisation of cultural production and social relations across Liverpool.

**New narratives, new practices?**

Only faint echoes of this celebration of the diversity/World in One City narrative arose in the City Councillor’s presentation in 2010. Towards the end of his talk, he described projects dealing with migration, diversity and social inclusion as one of the ‘successes’ of Liverpool’s Capital of Culture programme. The MA students were shown images of smiling members of the public and performers at multi-ethnic festivals held in parks around Liverpool 8. There was a clear sense of the value accorded to the promotion of diversity within European contexts. Making explicit comparisons between the UK approach to managing diversity and that of other European or francophone models, the speaker said:

“I think in the UK we are quite good. Other people talk of ‘la culture’, ‘le dialogue.’ Nobody else seems to be putting the ball in the back of the net and actually doing something”.

From my involvement in different European networks, I was aware that this message had achieved a certain success within in European networks (including at the event evoked in the Introduction). What was not explained, however, was what exactly was being done, nor why. Implicitly, doing something about “la culture” or “le dialogue”
was linked to the management and professional staging of ethnic difference. This was a pale imitation of the narratives of diversity set out in the bid, where the city’s cosmopolitanism was a key part of Liverpool’s place marketing.

Here, there is a clear difference between Liverpool and London. For the ‘World in One City’ was adopted as a slogan for the London Olympics 2012 (a project in which Bob Scott was also involved). Yet in Liverpool, this slogan came to have a limited value and functioned mainly on the margins of the project. This next section attempts to make sense of this shift in narratives and practices between 2003 and 2010.

**Shifting institutional frames and changing values**

It is of note that certain interviewees did identify certain changes in how social relations and culture were talked about in the city during the period of the bid. One policy-maker described a conscious effort to make people from different backgrounds visible within urban structures and policy documents. A cultural diversity steering group was established as part of the bid-writing process (although this group was dissolved before the bid was submitted).

As I describe in more detail in Parts 2 and 3, certain - largely middle class-led – associations, representing particular forms of culturally-diverse production that could complement urban marketing strategies, saw their chances of being recognised as cultural producers increase. For instance, the profile of Arabic arts in the city gained in significance, through the establishment of an Arabic arts festival that emerged out of collaborations between an Arabic arts association and an elite city centre arts institution. Similarly, following years of marginalisation because of links between the Irish presence in the city and sectarianism, an Irish festival that aimed to promote the culture and history that connected Ireland and Liverpool received considerable funding and institutional support (see Part 3). Further - unlike Marseilles - grant-funding was made available for voluntary and community associations and small arts organisations to bid for small grants to develop ‘cultural’ projects.

To a degree, this enabled urban dwellers of different backgrounds to put themselves forward as cultural producers. However certain associations including ‘working class’

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42 LI23  
43 LI21
black organisations and those providing regular social and cultural services for people of Chinese origin in the city felt that they had less support for artistic and cultural development in the lead-up to 2008, as money was siphoned to more prestigious, one-off projects. This was despite black and Chinese presence in the city having been foregrounded in the bid as markers of the city’s diversity (Impact08 2010).

Weak internal support for diversity

A significant factor structuring the appropriation of the cultural diversity rhetoric was the reliance on external ‘experts’ to develop the bid. Few people had felt that Liverpool’s bid would be successful, and little consideration had been given to the institutional framework to manage the post-bid implementation (O’Brien 2011). The experts behind the ‘World in One City’ branding were less involved after the bid was won. Moreover, since the late 1980s the management of diversity or multiculturalism in the city had been largely outsourced to the third sector. This meant there were few champions promoting multicultural or cosmopolitan policies within the Council framework.

The delivery of the cultural project was subsequently outsourced to a new team of external ‘experts’. The team was headed up by an Australian artistic director (2004-2006) with experience of working in globally powerful and rich cities. They brought with them different perspectives of what (high arts) cultural diversity looks like. In the words of one interviewee:

“The whole World in One City line was downplayed during the central years of 08…probably out of feeling that compared to other cities [laugh], the statement felt very grand from an international point of view. It just, it could not ring very true. You know, if you compare a place like Liverpool with somewhere like London or Vancouver…You know, there are other cities that have a far more visible and integrated multicultural population”. 44

For this interviewee, the (implicitly low) “scale of Liverpool” was given as a reason for the lack of uptake of the cosmopolitan narrative.

44 LI23
As a number of interviewees affirmed, once the bid was won a key objective became the construction of an image of Liverpool as a destination for ‘high arts’ and ‘cultural tourism,’ and a place to invest. There was a huge focus on getting positive stories about the city into the national press. For certain decision-makers with an international perspective, Liverpool’s vaunted ‘ethnic’ and ‘local’ ‘cosmopolitanism’ was not a cultural or locational asset. The World in One City branding was not considered suitable for national (for this, read ‘London’) and international audiences, and marketing material related to this was carefully removed from all city centre locations. This theme was relegated to socio-cultural projects located in impoverished parts of the city, or to multi-ethnic festivals.  

*Liverpudlian twists on hierarchies of cultural value: from high art...*

This is a familiar story in contemporary culturally-inflected urban development policy. However it is important to qualify how this version of the domination of high arts/high culture played out in Liverpool. In this city, the hierarchy of cultural values introduced by international experts clashed with local - ‘working class’ - political and cultural values held by many urban leaders (O’Brien and Miles 2010). Certain urban decision-makers decried cultural programming that was seen as too elitist and ‘international’. These differences in cultural value are widely understood as leading to the resignation of the Australian artistic director of the Liverpool Culture Company in 2006. This led to a shift in the governance of cultural policy in the city.

Under the New Labour government, official rhetoric promoted the inclusion of cultural workers in policy-making (Glinkowski 2012). Yet initially elite arts organisations in the city only had a consultative role in the development of the Capital of Culture bid (O’Brien 2010). Following the resignation of the artistic director, the Capital of Culture project was essentially brought ‘in-house’ and directed by the municipality and city centre arts organisations. This was institutionalised in 2007, when the eight principal institutions (see Part 2) bid for funding from Arts Council England, supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency and Liverpool City Council, to form a

45 Other actors, such as the Liverpool International Slavery Museum would argue differently: This museum has been successfully attracting people to the city to explore their critical analysis of how Liverpool benefited from, and the legacies of, transatlantic slavery particularly in cultural spheres in the city.
grouping known as the *Liverpool Arts and Regeneration Consortium* (LARC my emphasis).

...to regeneration, festivals and ‘world-class’ events

The language used in the LARC vision and value statements is replete with the language of social transformation and entrepreneurial urban ‘boosterism’. Links with government bodies and agencies that promote economic and social development are underlined, reflecting the emphasis on ‘partnership’ brought in by the New Labour UK government. A range of documents described how LARC organisations support the work of the municipality, and emphasises the “business focus” of the programme delivery (LARC nd). Headline objectives of LARC include the aim of promoting Liverpool as a “world-class creative city”. These documents could have been written by policy-maker policymakers in the City Council. In fact there was at the time a circulation of experts from the universities, City Council and the arts organisations, reflecting the slippage between the categories of elite ‘cultural worker’ and ‘urban decision-maker’.46

The Capital of Culture programme that was developed included a mix of major ‘popular’ celebrations of ‘local’, ‘Scouse’ culture (the opening concert with Ringo Star a former Beatle performing on the roof of St Georges’ Hall) and ‘world-class’ mainstream arts exhibitions. The latter were highlighted in the talk by the Council spokesperson in 2010, who spoke with pride of what he described as the “*world class*” events, and “*blockbuster*” exhibitions including a Klimt exhibition at the Liverpool Tate Gallery and the street performance of a massive mechanical spider produced by a French street theatre company, performances that had very little to do with the cultural identity of the city.

From ‘popular culture’ and ‘diversity’ to ‘regenerating communities’

The writers of Liverpool’s Capital of Culture bid had emphasised the city’s cosmopolitan communities and evoked ‘working class’ forms of cultural expression varying from football, boxing and racing to local humour to create a unique identity for the city. In other words, the ‘ordinary’ culture of urban dwellers was presented as an asset in this place marketing initiative. However, very significantly, the city’s cosmopolitan identity and working class, popular forms of cultural expression were

46 LI13
firmly located in descriptions of the city’s past. When projecting visions of the city of tomorrow, culture was presented as a policy that could transform the economic and social fabric of the city:

“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 2003)”.

Culture had become co-opted as tool for engineering social and economic change, in ways that relegated local ways of being and cultural values of ‘the community’.

Towards the end of the presentation, the speaker echoed such an approach. He told the group that “regeneration cannot just be about buildings” (my emphasis; the ‘just’ is very telling) it was also about “the community”.  

‘The community’

‘The community’ has long been a social-space for state intervention in the UK. It emerged as a key term in the Community Development programme of the 1970s under the Labour government (Tonkiss 2003 [2000]). This optic continued to circumscribe state intervention under the Conservative government of the 1980s and 90s, notwithstanding the shift to a focus on economic rather than social development. In line with the spread of the ideology of neoliberalism, policy increasingly offered communities ‘opportunities’, on condition that they took on responsibilities - in ‘partnership’ - for work previously associated with the state. Under the New Labour administration, an increased focus on the provision of collective consumption (for example, as embodied by the establishment of family centres in impoverished neighbourhoods) was accompanied by a ‘New Right’ focus on entrepreneurialism, civic responsibility and collective action; that is, getting involved in ‘the community’ (Amin 2005: 613). Furthermore, as was increasingly the case across Europe, urban social deprivation and social exclusion were strongly identified with race and ethnicity.

47 For my comparative purposes, it is important to note that under the French national system, references to community (communauté) are generally associated with ethnic, religious or national group formation and separation and, therefore, a threat to the “one and indivisible Republic” As a rule, rather than mobilising ‘the community’; in France, urban policy focused on creating links between individuals and state institutions. Instead of encouraging partnership between ‘the community’ and the ‘state’, ‘partnership’ is conceived in statist terms in relation to collaboration between different government. See Part 2 for a more detailed discussion.
‘Community participation’ and ‘community cohesion’ began to be understood and presented as processes for ‘managing’ various social minorities, imagined as ‘ethnic communities’ (Back 2009; Kennett and Forrest 2006; Tonkiss 2003 [2000]).

In the presentation to the European MA students, cultural interventions described as involving ‘the community’ focused on city centre arts organisations funded to deliver arts projects in impoverished parts of the city. Such projects were generally structured around traditional and elitist notions of ‘culture’ as separate from everyday life. As is explored in detail in Part 2, the Liverpool 08 programme included grants for grassroots projects supporting ‘ordinary,’ ‘everyday’ forms of cultural expression and cultural practices developed within impoverished neighbourhoods by both groups that identified in terms of ethnicity, race, nationality and religion, as well as associations that worked with people based on geographical area, age or disability. Nevertheless, as the programme developed, in Liverpool, as in other cities, popular and working class understandings of culture were increasingly seen by certain policy-makers as holding back economic growth opportunities (Allen 2008; Latimer and Munro 2015).

**Cultural policy in a city where “public sector cuts are beginning to bite”**

When summing up the impact of Liverpool 08, the main emphasis of the speaker was on visitor numbers and the national and international media coverage that was attained. His narrative was supported with pictures of the new city centre architecture: The private concert and conference venue, the cruise liner berth and the vast private retail development that I described at the beginning of this section. Using a plethora of spatial and scalar metaphors, he told the group that the European Capital of Culture project has put Liverpool “back on the map”; “back in the European premier league”. In the classic language of urban entrepreneurialism, the group was told that the administration was now “business friendly”. He provided statistics in support of Liverpool’s relative upscale position in comparative urban tables for popularity as a shopping and tourist destination and the amount of private sector money that was brought in, “which” he said in a highly significant aside, “was important now that the public sector cuts were beginning to bite”.

Following the presentation, another urban planner had been asked to give the group a tour that would show the legacy of Liverpool 08. He led us to the Liverpool One
Two years later, I interviewed the Council speaker again. This time our meeting took place in the new offices of the municipality’s rebranded cultural service or ‘business unit;’ Culture Liverpool. The offices were situated on the 10th floor of a building (symbolically) named ‘The Capital.’ Culture Liverpool was sharing offices with the public-private urban development agency, Liverpool Vision, set up by the Council to manage property-led city centre development in 2000.

The relocation of the offices of Culture Liverpool took place as part of a restructuring of the municipality at a time when Liverpool, still the most deprived city in the country, had suffered some of the most severe budget cuts in the context of austerity politics. This had led to the shedding of public sector 1,200 jobs and reduced funding for libraries, leisure centres and the youth service (Butler and Carter 2011). Yet, local urban leaders in Liverpool did not protest against the latest round of budget cuts. This was a clear legacy of Liverpool’s lost struggle to stand up to Central Government in the 1980s. Manifestly attempting to avoid the negative framing of the city in the 1980s, one Labour councillor told me that they did not want Liverpool to be seen as a “whining Scouser”. The message from the Council was that they wanted to work with, not against Central Government (Frost and North 2013).

In the ‘local’ space of the interview rather than the ‘European’ space of the presentation, the narratives that this municipal representative recounted were not about heritage, nor about diversity, nor even about Europe. With Liverpool no longer eligible for ‘Objective One’ funding, the city leadership no longer looked to Europe. A number of interviews talked about new links been developed with China and the UK and current urban repositioning strategies continue to reflect a local sense of Liverpool’s socio-spatial isolation from the national political economy. In this light, the speaker presented the legacy of Liverpool 08 in terms of developing the expertise that resulted in Liverpool’s

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48 Endemic of the increasing delocalisation and commodification of property in the city, the building was acquired by a Liverpool-based investor in 2006, who was not able to maintain payments on his loan, resulting in the debt being sold on to a US private investment firm in 2013.

49 LI7
presence at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010 and hosting of the International Festival of Business in Liverpool in 2012. Most telling, perhaps, is the decision by policy-makers to open a Liverpool embassy in London, as an attempt to seduce investment from the country’s financial capital and position Liverpool within international circuits of capital accumulation. As public sector cuts continue, private investment is increasingly considered the city’s only hope. In a conversation with another urban planner, I was shown an artist’s impressions of a huge development planned by a private investment group that would involve the massive restructuring of the skyline of the impoverished north of the city, Liverpool Waters. This was part of a larger project by the Peel Group to invest £50 billion in the wider city region. As Central Government and EU funding reduces, Liverpool Waters reflects the increasing role of non-state actors in urban restructuring in the city (Harrison 2013).

Such changes have consequences for who and what is able to be included in cultural and city-making processes. Overall, at the city level and within impoverished neighbourhoods, the value of the symbolic or cultural economy in national and local policy seemed to be less central. Indeed, in an interview with another key urban policy-maker, I was told the aim was no longer for Liverpool to be “cool”, but to be “smart” as the possibility for this city to capitalise on culture were re-evaluated. Yet, for the Estate Manager of Liverpool One, performances of ‘culture’ were carefully controlled in the streets under their management, to complement retail strategies. Rules had been introduced dictating who could or could not busk or sell street magazines in this privately-managed space.

Municipal funding for cultural events continues, despite budget cuts hitting public sector services. When I interviewed the Head of Participation and Engagement at Culture Liverpool, she spoke with pride about an event that she and others were organising, a cultural production paid for out of a European Capital of Culture legacy fund. The project involved the organisation of a major street performance, produced by the French street theatre company that was considered such a success in 2008. She described how impoverished neighbourhoods were to be transformed into a “stage” for the event, so confirming the city’s reputation as a ‘visitor destination’. Local people

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50 LI16
51 LI19
were no longer considered participants but spectators. The new, slick website of Culture Liverpool proclaims that it will be “using culture as the driving force for the regeneration of the whole city”. There is not one reference to cultural diversity or migration history on the site.

Summing up

This section shows how the ‘cultural’ turn in Liverpool emerged in tight configuration with the growing dominance of a neoliberal ideological framework for urban governance in the 1980s, in ways that were intersected with legacies of colonialism; understandings and experiences of class and race; and shifting relative understandings about Liverpool’s place in the world. Despite a short flurry of narratives celebrating migration and diversity within the bid, the city’s ‘diversity’, in the form of the ‘BME communities’ continued to be imagined as contained within Toxteth. This was a blinkered, ‘othering’ vision, structured by race and class that ignored historic and recent patterns of migration elsewhere in the city. This analysis of Liverpool challenges any taken-for-granted notion that associates elite reifications of multiculturalism and bland celebrations of diversity with market-led growth (Holmes 2000). It nuances the idea of a uniform ‘Anglo-Saxon’ model of promotions of diversity. The story is showed to be yet more complicated in Part 2, where I look at how competing notions of cultural value and social difference came to ground in one impoverished area of Liverpool. First though, I examine how elite urban place-making and marketing narratives and practices materialised in Marseilles.

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52 LI12
53 Culture Liverpool, www.cultureliverpool.co.uk/about-us, accessed 01/05/2015.
Marseilles: Culture and cosmopolitanism in a Provençal/Mediterranean city?

Setting the scene

The Liverpool conference took place in a building that symbolised the city’s former world-city status. In contrast, the Marseilles event was held in the ‘Villa Méditerranée,’ a building that epitomises contemporary efforts for cultural, geopolitical and economic repositioning - notably linked to questions about Marseilles’ location vis-à-vis ‘the Mediterranean.’ The structure was a striking white edifice, built on one of the jetties of the former 19th century port, facing out across a newly landscaped, public esplanade towards the Mediterranean Sea. Its opening in 2013 was formally included within the Marseilles Provence 2013 cultural programming, as was the inauguration of the arresting black, lattice-worked square building sited alongside it. The latter housed the national Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM). From 2009, this part of the city was labelled ‘La Cité Méditerranée’ and subsumed under the management of the state-led, Euro-Méditerranée Urban Development Agency (Euromed), a major actor in urban transformation processes and understandings and representations of culture and difference in Marseilles.

The event

The event I analyse here was the seventh annual meeting of a network of students, academics and policy-makers who assembled to discuss the European Capital of Culture project. The conference is a useful entry point through which to study socio-spatial relations in Marseilles for several reasons. To begin with, it is one more example of the ways in which academic study tours and ‘European’ events contribute to the dissemination of urban policies and narratives of place. Other events I attended had academic and European dimensions; but the number of institutions that had been invited to speak at this session illustrates from the start the level of complexity in terms of numbers of actors and ‘scales’ involved in urban policy in France.

Urban policy in France can involve six levels of state institutions (local mayor, overseeing particular arrondissements and quartier, the Municipal Council, responsible

54 I gave a paper at this conference entitled: “Multicultural Marseilles? Towards a relative understanding of narratives of diversity in France’s second city”.
for the ‘commune’ or city, then the Departmental Council, the Regional Council, Central Government and ‘Europe’). Following the gradual neoliberalising of French urban governance (Kipfer 2016), the picture has been complicated with a growing number of public, semi-public and private organisations.

That day, spokespersons attended from two locally-elected assemblies (the right-wing Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) municipality of Marseilles and the Socialist-led Regional Council of Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur) and two other institutions involved in urban transformation processes in Marseilles (the association Marseilles Provence 2013 and Aix-Marseilles University). The preliminary programme of the conference listed a whole sheaf of other institutions who had been invited, including representatives from the regional Prefecture (Central Government’s representative in the region), the Socialist-led Departmental Council of the Bouches-du-Rhône, and an inter-communal agency, Marseilles Provence Metropolis Urban Community, that had been established in 2001. Institutions not invited but key to current urban transformations include the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseilles Provence (CCI) (whose president is also the president of the association Marseilles Provence 2013), the state-led urban development agency, Euromed (established in 1995), and public agencies responsible for implementing a national programme of area-based urban renewal in impoverished areas across the city. Each of these had different or overlapping responsibilities for various aspects of urban and/or cultural policy. The event offers a good way to explore the complex ecology of urban policy in Marseilles.

The subject of the conference was ‘Cultural encounters: the mosaic of urban identities,’ also links well with the concerns of this thesis. According to the call for papers circulated by the organisers of this European conference, the theme was chosen because the conference was to be held in Marseilles, a place described as “a multicultural city par excellence”.55

In fact, multiculturalism was a term I rarely heard in Marseilles. When I asked urban or cultural policy-makers whether Marseilles was ‘multicultural,’ and whether there were

policies to promote multiculturalism, the majority dismissed the term. One Council official described it as an “Anglo-Saxon” or “German” concept. Others defined it as a policy term imposed from above by ‘Europe.’ When carrying out fieldwork in the association MP2013, I noted a diffidence regarding towards the language of multiculturalism reflecting formal ‘French Republican’ concerns about promoting “communitarianism” and ghettoisation (see Introduction).

To illustrate the latter point: in 1993, the then Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua declared that France could be a “multi-ethnic and multi-racial” society but not a “multicultural one”, reflecting the tight links between ‘culture’ and national cohesion in France (Le Monde, 21-22 March, 1993, cited in Dikeç 2006: 67). Of course, Pasqua’s comments need to be situated in time and space. They apply to the ‘abstract’ space of the nation and were uttered 20 years before the conference.

In the accounts that I analyse in October 2013, the official speakers dealt differently with the language of multiculturalism. Two deliberately presented their contributions in the terms of the conference, reflecting the existence of pragmatic acceptance of the term multiculturalism in particular (European?) circumstances, in rhetorical terms in any case. The local Councillor for the right-wing UMP party asserted that Marseilles was multicultural. The representative from the association Marseilles Provence 2013 posed the question: “I believe you are interested in immigration? In multiculturalism?” before he gave a roll-call of different waves of migration, as if to demonstrate the city’s ‘multicultural-ness.’ The representative for the Regional Council focused more on ‘intercultural dialogue’, a term that emerged in the European sphere towards the end of the first decade of the new millennium. One official did not mention ethnic diversity or multiculturalism at all. The presentations of the four officials serve as portals to probe how narratives and governance of social diversity and culture developed in Marseilles in relation to this European cultural initiative and overlapping urban repositioning strategies, including that of positioning Marseilles within the social space of Euromed symbolised by the La Cité Méditerranée described above.

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56 MI33
Tensions in narratives of diversity

Multicultural Marseilles from a municipal perspective

The UMP municipal representative for higher education was a smartly dressed white woman. She read her pre-prepared speech in French in an accent untouched by a Marseillaise inflection, a significant marker of elite class position in the city. In front of this ‘European’ audience, she declared that Marseilles was multicultural. To illustrate her point, she drew on two references that were regularly cited in accounts of Marseilles since the mid-1990s, and listed waves of different groups of migrants that had settled in the city.

The first reference was to the historian Fernand Braudel, whose name I had heard in other elite and erudite settings, such as at debates organised by the MuCEM. This municipal speaker used Braudel to describe historic economic and social networks that had contributed to making the city a ‘multicultural’ place. The second allusion was to Marseilles’ foundational myth; a tale that describes the establishment of the city following a marriage between a travelling Phoenician sailor, Protis, and Gyptis, a Gaulish princess from 600 BC. I discuss both below. First though I wish to emphasis that, in contrast to the Liverpool presentation, this description of social relations in 2013 was remarkably close to portrayals of the ethnic and cultural diversity of residents of Marseilles that bid writers presented in the Marseilles-Provence European Capital of Culture dossier written seven years earlier.

In the preamble to the bid document drafted in 2007, the director of the MP2013 project (described in more detail later) wrote:

“From the beginning of the city’s history, Marseilles welcomes and unites. Over the centuries wave upon wave of migrants have added to each other. Despite tensions and conflicts, these populations have become embedded, creating new strata. Kabyles, Catalans, Armenians, Greeks, Lebanese, Italians, Spanish, and nationalities from across the Maghreb have come and mixed with Sub-Saharan Africans, Vietnamese and Chinese peoples. Today thirty ethnic groups live

57 As another commentator on this conference noted, most of the audience were not French speaking and would not have understood her (Fisher 2013); a practical factor affecting the circulation of narratives and policy in international spheres.
side by side in the heart of Marseilles: 80,000 Armenians, 200,000 people from Maghreb and Africa, and 70,000 Comorians. Marseilles is the premier Corsican city, the second largest Armenian city, a major Italian agglomeration, one of the foremost Pied-Noir cities and with a significant Greek colony. Isn’t it said,” the bid writers asked rhetorically, “that the city is the 49th Wilaya (region) of Algeria and the largest Comorian city?” (my emphasis)

In both the Councillor’s presentation and in the bid documents, the story of this trans-border, cross-cultural marriage serves as a metaphor to describe the successful integration of migrants with the “local population” (Association MP2013 2009: 20). This story was cited in my interviews with elite policy-makers, and surfaces regularly in the media and in scholarly journals, as well as in conversations with ‘ordinary urban dwellers’ (Gastaut 2003; OSF 2010). The speaker, similarly to the bid writers, used such stories to back up the assertion that Marseilles was a place that was “welcoming” and “open to all”. In both accounts Marseilles’ association with ethnic diversity and migration was presented as innate (“From the beginning of the city’s history...”; “Marseille is multicultural…”).

What is masked in these essentialising portrayals of urban social relations and “immigration talk” (Gilroy 2004) is an absence of any discussion about how representations of social and cultural difference have shifted over time. To convey some sense of this, I historicise how changing symbolic and material practices affected narratives of social difference and urban incorporation in ways that were inflected by class, racialised difference and multi-scalar relations of power (Cooper 1999). As with Liverpool, this synopsis gives the basis from which to analyse how the idea/policy/process of the European Capital of Culture project affected ‘local’ organisations, and depictions and experiences of cultural and social difference.

**Historicising the governance of difference**

*From Mediterranean city-state to gateway city of empire*

If, when standing in front of the Villa Méditerranée with your back to the sea you head right, circling the 17th century fort that guards the mouth of the natural harbour, you arrive at what is now known as the *Vieux Port* (old port), a part of the city that is key to understanding the multi-scalar processes affecting Marseilles’ relative place in the
world. When Marseilles emerged as a city-state in the Middle-Ages, this port was the hub of trade routes that criss-crossed the Mediterranean Sea. It was a period in Marseilles’ past during which urban dwellers in the city strongly resisted attempts of political, economic and cultural domination by the French monarchy. By the mid-18th century, Marseilles was increasingly becoming fused - though not without some resistance - into the French nation-state (this resistance was symbolised by the forts partly built by Louis XIV to control any potential rebellion against state power) (Dell’Umbria 2006).

In the 18th century, as part of the apparatus of nation-state building, a contemporary artist, Claude Joseph Vernet, received a royal commission to document the bustling scene of this French seaport. Entitled the ‘Interior of the Port of Marseilles’ (1754). The scene depicts a hive of activity. Vessels from across the Mediterranean Sea lie in the harbour awaiting cargoes to be loaded and unloaded by workers on the docks. Reflecting a certain pride in the international extent of the city’s trade, the work depicts ‘global,’ turban-wearing merchants negotiating deals with ‘local’ Marseillaise traders and ‘local’ women hawking goods along the quays.

A century later, Marseille was the key port for the expanding French colonies, and the city experienced massive inward migration and urbanisation driven by France’s colonial expansionism and the industrial revolution (Sewell 1984). The city’s relative position vis-à-vis France’s colonial centre shifted. Seen from Paris, Marseilles was a port of transit, a thoroughfare to elsewhere. The city was increasingly considered as on the peripheries, and ‘outside’ the national psyche (Bliais and Fabiani 2011; Dell’Umbria 2006). Further, similarly to other European port-cities (Lee 1998), the area around the docks and harbour were inhabited and worked by labouring classes. In Marseilles’ case, at this period, these were predominately made up of impoverished migrants arriving from Italy, then Spain and joined later by colonial subjects, following routes opened up following the expansion of the French empire (Témime 1985). The presence of a large, foreign labour force in the centre of the city contributed to Marseilles’ reputation as a working class, almost extraterritorial city with little ‘cultural capital’ for local and national elites during this time of French nation-state building.

In France’s turbulent 19th century, many urban restructuring initiatives were funded by part of French state building efforts. At the same time, as changes in technology had
rendered the port unsuitable for the loading and unloading of larger cargo ships venture capitalists from Paris invested in modern docks that were constructed to the north of the city centre, where La Villa Méditerranée sits today. Other urban city centre construction projects were funded by local and national elites attempting to generate economic and cultural capital in this rich but ‘provincial’ city.

The results of what today would be called ‘gentrification’ are embodied in prestigious cultural institutions and grandiose ‘Haussmannian’ streets around the new docks. Their construction resulted in considerable dispossession and displacement from the city centre of what were seen as the poor, racialised and potentially rebellious ‘classes dangereuses’ in very similar areas being targeted by the state-funded Euromed urban development scheme (Sewell 1985, see Harvey 1989 for a discussion of contemporaneous processes of urban restructuring in Paris). As noted in the introduction, these early forms of gentrification efforts were only partially successful, undermined as those who made their fortunes in Marseilles tended to move out to neighbouring Aix-en-Provence or to Paris (Fournier and Mazzela 2004). The city continued to be viewed as working class and foreign (Bias and Fabiano 2012). Significantly, urban marketing efforts to attract tourists or capitalist investors in the late 19th and early 20th centuries portrayed Marseilles as a ‘gateway:’ either to Provence, the Côte d’Azur, the ‘French Riviera’ and the Alps, or to North Africa and other French colonies.

Memory loss, mass migration and decolonialisation in the Trente Glorieuses

Across France, the post-war period involved a collective effort to move on from France’s difficult war and dynamics of decolonisation (Balibar 2012). Marseilles was no exception. During the Second World War, a number of Marseilles’ leaders collaborated more or less explicitly with the Nazi occupying forces in rounding up Jewish residents, particularly targeting areas around the port (Dell’Umbria 2006).

In similar ways to Liverpool, Marseilles’ economy was badly affected by the adjustments of the international political economy in the mid-20th century58 (Savitch and Kantor 2002). Significant differences, however, need to be underlined. Most notably,

58 The Trente Glorieuses is a phrase coined to refer to the period between 1945-1975 when the French economy grew rapidly, averages wages rose and the welfare state system was developed.
Liverpool lost half of its populace and became ‘less diverse’ vis-à-vis other large British cities (see above). In contrast, the population in Marseilles grew by around 50 percent (from 670,000 to 920,000) between 1950 and 1975. This growth in city dwellers was influenced by the reconfiguration of the geopolitics of Europe at the end of the Second World War; state-funded urban reconstruction; and the bloody and bitter dynamics of decolonisation.

Internal immigrants arrived from the impoverished alpine regions of the country, Corsica and the war-torn north of the country. Political refugees and economic migrants came from Italy, Spain and Portugal. And - as across the rest of France - ‘guest workers,’ or ‘Muslim workers’ (colonial subjects of Arabic and Berber background) were recruited to provide the requisite labour to rebuild the city. In the late 50s and early 60s, against the backdrop of the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962), over 120,000 ‘repatriated’ European settlers (known as pieds-noir) in Marseilles, along with Sephardic Jews and gypsies from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and those categorised and othered as ‘Muslim’ workers from the newly independent Algeria arrived in Marseilles (Témime 1985).

It is worth noting that such lists of waves of migrants are regularly used when conjuring up an image of Marseilles as a city of immigration. Other regions of France, such as the Paris Region or the Rhône-Alpes, actually received proportionally greater numbers of migrants. Yet historically a greater emphasis - some contend an over-emphasis - has been given to the significance of migration in Marseilles (Roncayolo 1996; Peraldi and Samson 2005). Arguably, this is due to narratives of social difference being cut through with race and class. For many, the ‘wrong sort’ of migrants are seen to settle in Marseilles (Gastaut 2003). Often, this framing of social relations casts certain bodies as perpetual outsiders (Gilroy 2004; Peraldi and Samson 2005).

The importance of a multi-scalar, historically-situated analytic for understanding representation and governance of social relations in the city is particularly evident when considering this post-war period in Marseilles. Firstly, the post-war period saw a massive programme of reconstruction of French cities, predominately funded by Central Government money and, in Marseilles’ case, managed by elite, Central Government technocrats. This resulted in the recruitment of North African ‘Muslim’ workers from the French colonies, approximately 4500 of whom were based in Marseilles.
As struggles for independence led to the Algerian War (1954-1962) the presence of ‘French Muslim’ worker from Algeria was accompanied by fears about national security and xenophobia, as attacks by the Algerian National Liberation Front took place on French soil including the blowing up of gas storage tanks to the north of Marseilles. National and local policies were developed to improve the living conditions of workers living in shantytowns or bidonvilles. This led to rapid construction of high-rise housing estates (labelled cités de transit) in parts of the city that became identified as priority urban zones (ZUPs). These were built on low-value land in the centre and north of the city. These interventions prefigured later area-based urban development policies largely targeted at areas associated with a large immigrant population, known as politiques de la ville.

Elsewhere in the city, housing policies were shaped by a mix of top-down French technocratic urban planning and local politics of patronage (Kepfer 2016; Mattina 2007). With regards to the latter, mutual interests of mainstream left and right wing parties to keep out of power the French Community Party, which had a strong powerbase in the working class quartiers in the north of the city, influenced the location and allocation of resources such as housing and municipal jobs (Mattina 2001; 2007). The spatial imprint of these practices continues to shape the symbolic and material geographies of social relations in the city.

In brief, control of social housing to the south of the city - les quartiers sud - was managed by right-wing politicians and largely reserved for ethnically and socially homogenous professional classes and municipal employees (Dell'Umbria 2006). This part of the city remains considered to be a ‘white’ space. In the socialist and Communist north of the city, high-rise ‘HLMs’ were built with lower wage earners, the unemployed and artisans in mind. Initial tenants included municipal workers, and Italians and Corsicans with connections to municipal and departmental government, as well as the repatriated Pieds noirs. Over time, as national housing policy changed and ‘temporary workers’ settled permanently in the city, tenants in the north of the city moved out and increasingly people of visible migrant background were placed there, contributing to racialised representations of les quartiers nord in Marseilles.

Notwithstanding the diverse (racialised) state interventions, the majority of people of visible migrant background were left to fend for themselves. Many settled successfully,
playing a significant role in the reconstruction of the city-centre neighbourhoods, and forging rich economic and social, regional and transnational networks based on communal solidarities and inter-ethnic relations. These contributions remaining ignored in dominant place-marketing narratives (Peraldi 2002; Tarrius 1992). I describe some of these in Parts 2 and 3.

**Incipient uses of ‘culture’ in post-war urban development strategies**

In the early decades after the war, local leaders invested resources to rebrand Marseilles as France’s second city, a (white) ‘French modern’ city, worthy of comparison with Paris. These investments took the form of funding for ‘high art’ institutions such as the municipal Opera House in the city centre (Suzanne 2007). In parallel, ‘cultural’ aspects was incorporated into national and local area-based interventions to house migrant workers in ways that echoed policies developed in the French colonies (Kepfer 2016). The temporary housing estates included socio-cultural centres, built with the direct aim of facilitating ‘integration.’ North African migrants of Arabic, Berber or gypsy background were the objects of racialising ‘integration’ policies, and construed as possessing “an extremely low level of civilisation”.59

At the national level, cultural policy was being developed as a tool to promote national cohesion in the new ministry for culture. Policies were based on ideas of universal values of great art and programmes developed to promote the dissemination of canonical works to those deemed ‘far from culture’ (in other words those from working class and migrant backgrounds) by a patriarchal French state (Arnaud 2012; Urfalino 2010).

**Crises, culture and cosmopolitanism in the 70s**

Political and economic conditions and representations of Marseilles deteriorated in the mid-70s, linked to a conjunction of economic, political, social and cultural factors (Peraldi and Samson 2005). While the effects of the restructuring of the global economy and deindustrialisation were similar to those that hit Liverpool; in Marseilles the effects had been somewhat masked by the importation of petroleum during the Trente

59 Archives of the Marseilles Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Droit et législation, réglementation du commerce et de l’industrie étrangers (commerçants et travailleurs immigrés) : logement, hébergement des travailleurs étrangers à Marseille et dans les Bouches de Rhone.
Glorieuses and through national urban policy. The fractures to the urban economy were harshly exposed in the wake of the OPEC oil crises and the broader crisis of capital accumulation in the 1970s.

The city’s woes were further heightened by national regional policy that attempted to decentralise the French economy and increase the competitiveness of the port of Marseilles, which had become too small to handle large container ships or oil tankers. An extension of the port of Marseilles was sited 60km up the coast. Its establishment outside the city boundaries contributed to the weakening of the economic and fiscal base of the city, increasing both local unemployment and associated social costs (Roncayolo 1996). At the time industrial disputes regularly stopped work on the docks, while activities by the Italian and Corsican mafia in the city frequently hit the headlines. Marseilles was increasingly considered a difficult city in which to conduct business.

On the social front, the possibility of buying electoral loyalty through the distribution of housing and municipal employment dried up as state budgets shrunk. Unemployment and poverty grew, associated with an increasing intensity in xenophobic attitudes and violent racist attacks. This was reflected at the polling booths, as voters increasingly turned to the right wing Front National. Again, this story was being echoed in major urban areas across the country (and Europe), however Marseilles’ reputation was constructed out of the toxic association of a city facing economic and social crises, intersected with its reputation as a ‘foreign’ place and as ‘the capital of racism’ (Gastaut 2003; Peraldi and Samson 2005). It was at this juncture that narratives of cosmopolitanism began to surface in Marseilles.

Differently to the mobilisation of the black-led civil rights movement in Liverpool, in Marseilles calls for recognition of cultural difference and celebrations of the city’s ‘cosmopolitanism’ were led by representatives from the Catholic Church, cultural workers and activists loosely grouped around the ‘New Left’ movements (Gastaut 2003). In part, such efforts aimed to calm local social tensions, which included violent racist attacks; in part, they consisted of movements calling for ‘cultural democracy,’ challenging the dominant ‘universalising’ cultural values underpinning French cultural policy.
In parallel, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry also produced literature that promoted images of Marseilles as a tolerant cosmopolitan city (Gastaut 2003), indicating awareness by business leaders of both the need for migrant labour to rebuild the city and the importance of managing the city’s reputation. The rhetoric of economic leaders echoed concerns about breaching a ‘threshold of tolerance’ between the French population and ‘foreigners.’ In essence, certain migrants were seen as somewhat difficult for the French body politic to digest, replicating widespread concerns nationwide (Dikeç 2006).

_Culturally-inflected urban development in impoverished areas in the 1980s_

New frames for organising social relations emerged nationally following François Mitterrand’s election as French president in 1980, and the election of the Socialist Party to government in 1981. There was an attempt to respond to the fall-out from social housing that was hastily constructed in the 1950s and 60s in the priority urban zones or ‘les banlieues.’ Initially, there was a certain acknowledgement that urban problems were related to deep-seated structural problems in the early years. To some degree, national cultural policy was changed in response to the cultural protests of May 1968, across the country students, workers and other activists on the left rose against the cultural conservatism and elitism in France (Mayer 2013). While some of the patriarchal, elitist values underpinning French cultural policy brought in at the end of the 1950s remained, (Ingram 1998; Urfalino 2010), Central Government policy included a rhetorical commitment to the celebration of local ‘popular’ cultural forms of expression.

The progressive aspirations of Central Government were soon undermined however by the economic crisis that destabilised the European Economic Community in the early 1980s. As - across Europe - state budgets reduced, French national policies became more market-focused, involving a restructuring of the welfare state (Dikeç 2006). Mirroring trends across Europe, there was a move towards area-based interventions to deal with urban issues. Urban policy was reconfigured in socio-cultural rather than economic terms. Areas designated as ‘priority’ urban neighbourhoods or ‘sensitive quartiers,’ were increasingly associated with the language of ethnicity and immigration, couched in terms of dealing with the ‘social problems’ of the banlieues as well as French Republican cohesion (Tissot 2006). Urban policies aimed now at promoting
social diversity (mixité social) and social and cultural integration, and facilitating personal development and self-realisation (Tissot 2006; Tissot and Poupeau 2005).

These shifts in urban policy created new opportunities for cultural workers to participate in urban development in Marseilles. Following the lead of other socialist municipalities (notably that of Grenoble), the Marseilles’ mayor developed a deliberate strategy to invest in cultural policy as a tool for social development in impoverished neighbourhoods (Suzanne 2007). I explore this more in Parts 2 and 3.

The beginnings of incipient multiculturalism and a cultural turn in place-marketing
As neoliberal ideology began to gain a hold across advanced capitalist states, at a time when the centrist Labour party in Liverpool adopted policies based on an assumption that there was ‘no alternative’ to Thatcher’s version of market-led urban development and as the Socialist government in Paris was replaced by a right-wing administration, an ideological, political and economic shift occurred in Marseilles.

In 1986 a new leader of the Socialist Party, Robert Vigouroux, took over City Hall. Attempting to distance himself from the charges of clientelism and corruption associated with the previous administration, he built his reputation as a managerial mayor, reflecting the spirit of the time (Harvey 1989; Boltanski and Chiapello 2007 [2005]). Under his leadership, there would be a similar shift in ideologies and actors involved in urban governance that were seen in Liverpool, which affected socio-spatial stories of the city (Massey 1991; Swyngedouw et al. 2002). These are discussed in more detail below. Here, I note that a consensus emerged among key urban decision-makers (the municipality, Regional Council, Departmental Council, Chamber of Commerce and Central Government etc.) and that the city had to improve its standing internationally in order to attract public and private capital (Maisetti 2012; Tiano 2010).

Against a backdrop of Marseilles’ growing reputation as a racist place, and attempts to manage what was seen as ‘white flight’ from the city centre, with Islamophobia growing across Europe and the rise of the far right in the country, City Hall established a body known as Marseille Espérance in 1990. This was essentially a symbolic body and had no political power. Its purpose was to bring together heads of the different religions in the city for dialogue with the city mayor and aimed to offer leadership at moments of social crisis. Urban social relations were reconfigured in terms of ‘faith communities.’ It
can be seen as a harbinger of the institutionalisation of relations between the central state and religious organisations that would occur in France in the 2000s (Akan 2009). As seen in Liverpool, social and economic problems became couched as crises of identity and culture. However, echoing the comments of Pasqua above, there was no attempt to celebrate ‘cultural diversity.’ Indeed, in an interview with the project officer in 2011, the links between Marseilles Espérande and ‘culture’ were flatly denied, as if this verged too closely on a model of multiculturalism.

In parallel, new approaches were taken by local government to explore the potential of cultural policy both as a tool for place marketing and for ‘integrating’ urban dwellers, with implications for the organisation of socio-spatial differentiation and cultural value.

*A shift in the aestheticisation of urban development*

In the postwar years, local leaders had invested in cultural policy as part of rebranding of Marseilles as a worthy competitor for the place of France’s second city. A key part of this strategy involved investments in city-centre high art institutions such as the municipal Opera House (Suzanne 2007). In the 1980s, urban decision-makers in this city viewed as being relatively ‘conservative’ in their tastes. Similarly to Liverpool, many economic and political elites were reluctance to invest in ‘culture’ (O’Brien 2010; Pinson 2002). The new mayor took a different stance, being an amateur artist with close links to other elite cultural workers in the city.

It was during Vigouroux’s mandate that the sprawling site of a 19th century tobacco factory was purchased by the municipality and rented to artistic companies, who, following models that were being developed throughout Europe, developed the centre into a contemporary urban arts centre known as ‘Friche, La Belle de Mai’ or ‘La Friche’. It is worth drawing particular attention to La Friche, as serves as a marker of new forms of multi-level cultural policies in the city. Located just behind the central railway station in the 3rd arrondissement, one of the poorest neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of “foreigners” in the city, the La Friche was bought when new policies known as *politique de la ville* were being directed towards ‘priority’ neighbourhoods, including the quartier La Belle de Mai. *Politique de la ville* included budget lines supporting ‘cultural’ activity in impoverished neighbourhoods.

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60 LI24
Additionally, the area of La Belle de Mai around the Friche was included in the Euromed waterfront restructuring. Support for the Friche emerged out of these intersecting dynamics of urban repositioning and governance of social difference (Ingram 2009).

Interest in the potential of artists in urban development was emerging in national and international networks. As described in Part 2, a number of the cultural workers whom I followed set up associations to respond to these new funding opportunities. In parallel, a flush of Marseilles-based artists from hip-hop to crime writers were gaining national and international acclaim for work that foregrounded the city’s multi-ethnic population and fêted the cosmopolitan mix of the city. In national and international circles, a reputation as being ‘culturally diverse’ had begun to give the city a certain kudos (Peraldi and Samson 2005; Suzanne 2007). A more pragmatic reason for Marseilles’ new popularity was the state-driven, property-led development of the waterfront and change in relative location of Marseilles caused by the ‘TGV effect’. The opening of the extension of the high-speed train line (TGV) linking Paris and Marseilles in just over three hours, combined with the Euromed waterfront development, contributed to an escalation of land and property prices in the city centre in the early 2000s (Ronai 2009).

**Republican cohesion and ambivalent cosmopolitanism**

In 1995, there was a change of political leadership at City Hall. The municipality was taken over by the UMP centre-right party, under the leadership of Jean Claude Gaudin (who won his fourth mandate in 2014). Against a backdrop of rising support for the *Front National*, which scored highly in local and national elections, many urban decision-makers were vocal about wanting to change the profile of the population in the city centre. Certain representatives of the local UMP party made racialised interventions in the public sphere. A quote from the current city mayor of the right-wing UMP, taken from an interview he gave to a property investment magazine in 2001, makes the point: Talking about his plans to transform Marseilles’ city centre, he asserted:

“The ordinary Marseillais [Marseillais populaire] aren’t the Maghreb Marseillaise, they aren’t the Comorian Marseillaise. The centre has been invaded by a foreign population, the Marseillaise have left” (Interview with Jean Claude Gaudin in La Tribune, 5 December 2001, cited in Peraldi and Samson 2005: 175).
Racialising narratives such as these have been accompanied by deliberate policies that attempt to ‘re-conquer’ the city centre by displacing poor and/or migrant populations from central districts (Mazzalla 1995; Mitchell 2011), using terms reminiscent of French colonial policy (Kipfer 2016). Nonetheless elite rhetorical celebrations of the presence of people of visible migrant background and ‘populaire’ culture continued, in certain national and international circles at least (Maisetti 2012). The 1998 football world cup was regularly cited in interviews as a significant event in shifting narratives and representations of the city. As the victorious French team was lionised as the new multi-ethnic face of France, press coverage of Marseilles acclaimed the city’s cosmopolitan melting-pot.

Around this time, as new European anti-discrimination law was entering into force (Bertossi 2007), City Hall organised street parades and official histories to mark the 2600th anniversary of the city’s mythic foundation. Some have critiqued these public parades and bland rhetorical celebrations of waves of immigration as a reification of ethnic and religious communities. Suzanne (2007), for example, describes these events as orchestrated by the political elite and idealised by an artistic milieu, with little real role given to the ordinary citizens. Nevertheless they mark a particular - though short-lived - juncture when city leaders regularly celebrated diverse waves of migration as part of the culture of the city.

Another spurt of interest in the ‘Marseilles model’ for managing social diversity emerged in late 2005, when a number of French cities experienced ‘uprisings’, following the death of two young migrants fleeing police in the Parisian banlieues (Balibar 2012). The calm in Marseilles provoked articles in newspapers and journals reflecting on Marseilles’ successful model of integration (Mitchell 2011; Williams 2005). Municipal representatives responsible for Marseille Espérance reported an

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61 In Part 3, I explore how ordinary urban residents living in an impoverished neighbourhood where I carried out much of my fieldwork defined ‘vrais Marseillaises’ or the ‘Marseillaise de souche’ (born and bred Marseillaise).
62 The riots were a significant event in urban policy. They altered the language used for managing social relations across the country. The national government created the Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities (ACSE) in 2006. From this period urban contracts that governed and regulated politiques de la ville were renamed the Urban Contract for Social Cohesion (CUCS). The first contract covered the period 2007–2009, and was extended to 2013. Under this scheme there would be a renewed focus on ‘integration’ into the republican state. Cultural projects funded to work in impoverished neighbourhoods had to show how they could contribute to this.
increase in requests by delegations from other municipalities to learn about the ‘Marseilles’ approach to managing the integration of people of migrant background. No doubt, these representations in national and international media influenced the statement by the conference organisers that Marseilles was “multicultural par excellence”. This brings us up to the time when Marseilles’ Capital of Culture bid was developed.

**Multicultural or cosmopolitan Marseilles?**

In the bid, bid writers had adopted a language that contravenes French Republicanism, the presence of “more than thirty ethnic groups” yet they overtly rejected narratives of multiculturalism. Reflecting the changed political conditions in 2007/8 and growing rhetoric about the death of multiculturalism (Gilroy 2004), the Capital of Culture project developers directly linked multicultural policies with growing social and cultural segregation in Western nations, and implicitly linked multicultural policy with the growth of Islamic extremism in Europe through their support for “community leaders” and “traditional ideologies” (MP2013 2009: 70). They opted instead for the language of ‘cosmopolitanism’ to describe social relations in the city, asserting that:

> “Thus, Marseilles is the most cosmopolitan of all the cities from the Mediterranean” (MP2013 2009: 35).

Yet, when I interviewed people in 2011, a pattern emerged whereby the city’s ‘cosmopolitanism’ was described as matter-of-fact. Lacking the normative connotation often associated with the term, dominant narratives did not describe either a description of any innate openness to difference or a deliberate policy to promote cultural diversity. Rather, descriptions of Marseille as cosmopolitan tended to describe the visible - and often racialised - presence of individuals and groups identified as ‘different.’ For many, the presence of people of visible migrant backgrounds continued to function as a marker of the ‘otherness’ of Marseilles’ and its lack of ‘culture,’ when positioned in relation to other French cities such as Paris, Lyons or Toulouse or the neighbouring Aix-en-

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63 MI33
64 The bid document referred directly to a recent publication entitled “Marseille: Une métropole entre Europe et Méditerranée” (Langevin and Juan 2007) published by ‘La Documentation française’, as an official publication of the state
Provence. An interview with the person responsible for inter-communal relations in the City illustrates these two points clearly. She told me:

“A cosmopolitan city is a city at the centre of which you have an important number of communities of foreign background that impose a certain imprint on the life of the city, whether that is cultural or religious. An international city, I’ll take the example of Aix-en-Provence, is a city where you have expatriate communities who are there temporarily, but who will not necessarily leave an imprint on the life of the city: a large American community, a large German community...It’s not at all the same thing”.

Her comments illustrate how representations of social relations in Marseilles are often constituted in close relation to the city’s urban neighbours, in ways inflected with class and racism, which brings me to my next point.

MP2013, social difference and multi-scalar urban repositioning strategies

Marseilles’ European Capital of Culture project was overtly spatial in its ambitions. The subtitle of the Capital of Culture bid was “Marseilles Provence: From Europe and from the Mediterranean”. In the application, the book submitted on behalf of Marseilles’ bid was structured around two overarching geopolitical objectives. The first, entitled ‘Sharing the South’ (Partage le Midi) described the objective of the programme as enhancing the cultural aspect of the ‘Barcelona Process’, thus aligning Marseilles with European and national foreign and trade policy towards Europe’s southern border. The second, entitled ‘Radiant City’ (La Cité Radieuse), relates to the ‘Provence’ part of the title and refers to efforts to reposition Marseilles as regional capital.

These spatial frames have complex historical trajectories and are shot through with contradictions and tensions in the ways in which culture and social relations are represented and organised. The contribution of the spokesperson of the newly-formed University of Aix-Marseilles serves as a way in to explore how strategies to develop a ‘metropolitan’ or ‘Provençal’ social space affected descriptions and the governance of social difference in multi-scalar fields of power.

65 Situated 30 miles from Marseilles, Aix-en-Provence has traditionally been the administrative capital of the department, and is often considered Marseilles’ political, cultural and economic rival.
Marseilles-Provence: Talking about social relations and situating MP2013 in relation to metropolitan spatial politics

The representative from Aix-Marseille University was a white Frenchman. Unlike the municipality’s elected representatives, he spoke impeccable English; a marker of considerable cultural capital among the new ‘professional-managerial class’ in France (Serre and Wagner 2015). His presentation was dotted with the entrepreneurial language that has become increasingly common in the wake of the reconfiguration of the form and purpose of the university sector (Imrie 2009). He described how the European Capital of Culture had served the interests of the university, enabling it to better compete “at the international level”.

The merger of the universities of Aix and Marseilles in 2012 reflects efforts of Central Government and the local economic elite to create a greater-Marseille metropolitan area. This latter has been on the table since the de Gaullist era of the 1960s, as part of broader plans to both decentralise the national economy and maintain France’s position internationally (Donai 2009). National regional development initiatives resulted in the construction of an extension of the port of Marseilles sixty kilometres up the coast. This regional development policy produced a donut effect on the regional economy. Industrial activity traditionally based around the city centre docks of the regional capital relocated around the new container port and petrol distilleries up the coast, displacing employment opportunities as they did so. At the same time, commercial or light industrial activity began moving out of Marseilles to the new fiscally advantageous industrial or commercial zones set up in neighbouring communes.

While nominally the capital of the department and region, Marseilles’ leaders found themselves with less control over capital flows, and a smaller tax base than the surrounding urban districts, while having to bear the social and economic costs of running a large, impoverished city (Douay 2009). A consensus emerged among economic and political elites that establishing a metropolitan authority was seen as the logical way to balance the regional economy.

In other parts of France, the creation of city regions has been rolled out with relative ease. However, few of the surrounding communes wised to be burdened with costs associated with a large, impoverished city with high social costs. Historic rivalry between Aix-en-Provence (the historic, bourgeoisie administrative seat) and Marseilles
(the industrial, working class, ‘foreign’ city) also proved a political stumbling block to
closer union. On one occasion, the mayor of Aix-en-Provence, Maryse Joissains
Masini, described Marseilles as a city that was “open to all cultures” and had little in
common with Aix, a city that looked inwards, and aligned its cultural identity to the
interior of (white) France (Ronai 2009).

In short, Marseilles was considered as lacking the economic and symbolic power to
carry off its metropolitan function (Ronai, 2009; Roncayolo 1996). In the 1990s, after
decades of unsuccessful metropolitan rescaling of Marseilles, the political and economic
leadership looked to Central Government to intervene. As with Liverpool, it was a
moment when increased weight was given to external experts, the business sector and
local and national technocrats to come up with reports and feasibility studies to generate
a ‘professional’ view of what must be done (see also Swyngedouw et al. 2002). In his
well-cut grey suit, the speaker that day seemed typical of many elite technocratic policy-
makers I met in Marseilles, including the senior managers at the association MP2013.

**MP2013 and the professionalisation of urban place-marketing**

When contextualising the Marseilles Provence 2013 project in relation to broader urban
repositioning strategies and geometries of local power, it is important to know that
municipal leaders had been looking for an international event to “sell the city” from
around the turn of the century. First the municipality made a bid for the city to host
the America’s Cup yacht race in 2007 and developed plans to redesign the waterfront
accordingly (Peraldi and Samson 2005). The bid for this elite luxury competition was
not successful, and the process was considered an abject failure by many observers. In
2004, French cities were invited to put themselves forward to be the French European
Capital of Culture in 2013. The local authority in Marseilles declared its intention to
bid, a decision fully supported by economic leaders. However, following the America
Cup failure, key partners, especially the Chamber of Commerce, challenged the
competence of the local authority to lead the bid (Maisetti 2012).

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66 Over six years of fieldwork in Marseilles, I would continually come across people from Aix-en-
Provence and Marseilles, from a range of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, who would
describe Marseilles as a dirty, dangerous, disorderly place and contrast it unfavourably with Aix.
67 MI26
As with Liverpool, an ‘independent’ association, the association Marseilles Provence 2013 was established to develop the city’s candidature. Unlike Liverpool, the association was not led by an elected representative but presided over by the President of the Chamber of Commerce, who was presented as politically neutral. Similarly to Liverpool, the management of the proposal was outsourced to external experts. The person chosen for the job was a white French man, a former high-level civil servant. His CV included working for DATAR, the Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Territorial Development and Regional Attractiveness and the Ministry for Culture and Communication. He had also been involved in managing a mega-project of culturally-inflected redevelopment on the outskirts of Paris. His profile matched the cultural and territorial restructuring ambitions of many political and economic leaders.

As a professional technocrat and, most importantly, endowed with considerable cultural capital, for many people he was the antithesis of the local political culture linked to cultural and urban policy-making in Marseilles. His ‘professionalism’ has often been credited with Marseilles’ successful application (Giroud and Veschambre 2012). Following his appointment, two other (white French male) managers from the Euromed agency, recruited as senior managers of the cultural project. These appointments signal the tight connections between the state-led transformation of Marseilles’ waterfront and this culturally-inflected urban development initiative.

As the project developed, representatives from the surrounding urban local authorities, the Departmental Council, the Regional Council, the urban community organisation Marseille-Provence Metropôle, the local universities, the airport, the Top Twenty Business Club and Euromed came on board, reflective of the new orchestration of power in the city.

For certain urban leaders, including the Chamber of Commerce and the state-led Euromed agency, the Capital of Culture project was seized as an opportunity to develop popular support for a metropolitan spatial area in ways that would transcend prior understandings of socio-spatial and cultural difference. Despite on-going opposition from a number of local political leaders to the development of a Greater Marseilles city region, this was included as a central objective of the MP2013 initiative (Latarjet 2010; MP2013 2008). In the MP2013 literature, and within public forums, urban policy-makers regularly referred to the conglomeration of 130 different communes as the
‘MP2013 territory.’ Maps and marketing literature presented this area as if it were a ‘natural’ social-space.

From the start, the urban developments justified in terms of making the city ready for 2013 were also situated at the heart of the city’s metropolitan ambitions (AGAM 2009). A case in point was the military-sounding plan to transform the city centre, entitled ‘Opération Grand Centre Ville,’ which was launched soon after the city’s nomination as European Capital of Culture. Today, the area around the Vieux Port has been landscaped into a major public square by a British ‘starchitect.’ The harbour serves mainly as a touristic marina. Its inlet is cluttered with yachts and pleasure boats. Cafés, bars and restaurants line the quayside. From 2013, a large Ferris wheel and touristic stands are often installed in the public square that serves as a focus for many of the public events organised as part of Marseilles Provence 2013. I was told in one interview that this new city-centre had been conceived as “very design, very clean” (in English in the interview), developed for what the interviewee described as an imagined “Anglo-Saxon” public. Others talked about attracting back the middle classes, who were seen as having shunned the city, from the affluent arrondissements to the south of Marseilles and neighbouring Aix-en-Provence. The restructuring of public space and ‘Opération Grand Centre Ville’ has been accompanied by a campaign against “incivility” through heightened police presence and the installation of security cameras (AGAM 2009).

When place-marketing strategies promoted the metropolitan spatial scale, people of impoverished or visible migrant background (associated with Marseilles) disappeared from representations of the city. While one tenth of the population across the wider region has a background of migration (DROS-PACA 2013), yet, when ethnic diversity or migration was the object of elite debate the spatial focus was the city of Marseilles. Marseilles remains as a racialised marker of diversity. Elite strategies to create the

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necessary symbolic capital for a metropolitan capital are strongly influenced by the need to become ‘more French’ and ‘international;’ less ‘Marseillaise’ and ‘foreign.’

It is not insignificant that in the MP2013 bid proposal, descriptions of the city’s cosmopolitanism only featured in the prologues and introduction of the project. They were largely absent from the main body of the texts which where structured by metropolitan and Euro-Mediterranean ambitions for the city.

Talking about urban social relations in relation to the ‘Euro-Mediterranean’ spatial scale

The next speaker was from the Regional Council, an elected assembly established in the 1970s, not least as a means to manage the European Regional Development Funds. The Regional Council is a key actor in the urban transformation of Marseilles, with competencies in a range of social, economic and cultural spheres. The Council funds and is represented on the Board of Euromed, and contributes 12.5 percent of the €600 million budget provided by public bodies for Marseilles’ European Capital of Culture project (the municipality contributes 22 percent and the state and Europe 15 percent each). In contrast to the previous speaker, the Regional Council spokesperson focused on the Mediterranean dimension of the culturally-inflected project.

Again there is a history and politics to this. First and foremost, it is important to underscore that, run through with contradictory or overlapping geographical representations, ‘the Mediterranean’ is a geographical space that is resolutely ‘European’ in origin (Herzfeld 2005). Moreover, the term was first used at the time of the colonial expansion of European powers (Santa Cassia and Schäfer 2005). Secondly, Marseilles’ position within the Mediterranean region should not be taken for granted. Contemporary urban place-marketing strategies that describe Marseilles as a Mediterranean city only really emerged in the 1990s (Maisetti 2012). They did so as EU policy-makers were working up what came to be called the ‘Barcelona Process, a free-trade area and framework for bilateral and regional political, social and cultural cooperation between the 15 EU member states and 14 ‘Mediterranean’ partners, signed in the Catalanian city in 1995. From this moment, the Regional Council and other

69 For comparative purposes, I note that the Merseyside County Council was established at around the same time
decision-makers operating in the region militated within European circles to establish Marseilles at the hub of the nascent Euro-Mediterranean economic trade area. Evocations of Fernand Braudel became an obligatory reference in the marketing materials of the international relations department of Marseilles (Maisetti 2012). Marseilles’ historic location as a hub within pan-Mediterranean trading routes was used to justify contemporary efforts to depict Marseilles as the most Mediterranean of cities. Yet there was by no means unanimous acceptance of this ‘Mediterranean’ identity and future focus for the city; nor a consensus about what it meant (Bullen 2012). On the one hand, the ‘Euro-Mediterraneanification’ of the city involved the enticement of a proliferation of institutions with the ‘Mediterranean’ label to the restructuring city centre, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Economic Institutes and the Mediterranean sub-branch of the World Bank. Yet for many economic actors within and beyond the city, including managers of Euromed, there was concern about the ‘Mediterranean’ connection, fearing that its associations with North Africa would deter American and East-Asian investors. Instead, the initial geographical scope of the project was to attract investors from the Parisian region and north Europe (Bertoncello and Rodrigues-Malta).70

Prior to the European Capital of Culture bid, the Mediterranean wash on Marseilles’ restructuring had largely faded from the picture (Tiano 2010). Thus, when observing the new business district of the waterfront development, visible on looking north from the Villa Méditerranée along a newly-renovated, tree-lined boulevard, there seems very little in the fifteen thousand new offices located in the glass and steel towers and renovated 19th century warehouses, interspersed with boutiques, shopping centres, hotels, museums, art galleries and concert venues, that distinguishes Marseilles’ Euromed project from any other seafront gentrification aiming to attract tourists and global corporate investment found around the world. This reflected patterns on the international scene, as any symbolic or cultural component of the Euro-Med partnership was largely judged insignificant (Schumacher 2005).

However, the Capital of Culture bid was being drafted in 2007/8, when Nicholas Sarkozy, the then French president, was advocating for a reinvigoration of the Barcelona Process. In 2008, when rotating president of the EU, Sarkozy launched the Union for the Mediterranean as a means to re-animate this EU foreign policy. Given criticisms that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had largely focused on economic and security concern, senior managers responsible for drafting the bid (remember, former French civil servants who operated within national-level institutions) positioning Marseilles as the natural capital of the Euromed region, a crossroads “between Europe and the Mediterranean” (note the opposition), arguing that the Capital of Culture programme could offer some ‘cultural content’ to both European and French external relations. 71

*Mediterranean tensions in Marseilles*

The construction of Marseilles’ Mediterranean identity was clearly driven by the need to present an image of the city and the Mediterranean that met the national and European jury members’ expectations. Two familiar visions of the Mediterranean overlapped in the bid. Firstly, echoing European strategies to draw on antiquity to defend the thesis of a common European heritage, the prologue to the bid began with the assertion: “Europe was born in the Mediterranean” (Latarjet 2008: 17). Particular ‘universal’ understandings of certain inherent (Greco-Roman) ‘Mediterranean’ sensibilities in the arts, law and democracy were presented and described as being embodied in the person of the “homme européen.”

A different tale of the Mediterranean is given when the bid writers pan forward to the 21st century. Resonating with narratives in EU external relations since the 1990s (Schmid 2003), this version of the Mediterranean is understood as being ‘beyond’ Europe’s southern border. Instead of being a cradle of human endeavour, the Mediterranean is a place menaced by political, economic, social and cultural disaster. Growing numbers of young unemployed people on the southern banks of the Mediterranean Sea are presented as a risk to Europe, with references made to the attacks on the twin towers in the United States of America, and Samuel Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilisations” (Latarjet 2008: 19). Using the second person plural (“nous”) a

71 This is not the only city to do make this Mediterranean link. In Toulouse’s bid, the city was also represented as a Mediterranean city (Giroud and Veschambre 2012).
self-evident, exclusionary, European ‘us’, the director of the bid warned that if nothing is done to change the current situation, economic crises and inter-religious and ethnic tension will spread north onto European soil (Latarjet 2008).

As seen elsewhere in Europe, this effectively rendered ‘foreign’ the presence of people of non-European origin, echoing new boundaries and rhetoric of exclusion emerging across Europe (see Stolcke 1995). As I explore in more detail in below this had a major impact on how cultural diversity and ‘inter-cultural’ dialogue were understood in the cultural programme of MP2013. Rather than focusing on the cultural diversity of urban dwellers, arts projects were developed to promote cross-country exchanges with elite artists across the Mediterranean basin.

These differences in these two versions of the Mediterranean were apparent in the contradictory representations of the Municipal Councillor and the Regional Councillor. Whereas the former was a space of welcome and exchange, the Regional Council representative described a region riven by conflict and crisis, and in this context, represented the Regional Council and the Villa Méditerranée as helping to bridge pan-Mediterranean cultural difference. But it is important to stress that these Mediterranean visions for Marseilles are by no means stable. Civil unrest and war in North Africa, stagnation at the European level with regards to the Euro-Mediterranean policy, and a change of French president and foreign policy challenged the value of this spatial repositioning strategy.

In 2013, Central Government continues to invest in the symbolic Euro-Mediterranean project to a degree, through its financing of the MuCEM. However, reflecting developments in EU foreign policy, increasingly the cultural content of MuCEM is more concerned with bilateral cross-country exchanges rather than facilitating the construction of a pan-regional identity (Früh 2015). For many urban elites, the area around La Cité Méditerranée and the MuCEM is considered a success in symbolising the transformation of Marseilles’ waterfront into a site of middle class cultural consumption and, for some, in terms of ‘civilising’ Marseilles, than for its pan-Mediterranean focus.
Marseilles and Europe

The final speaker was the deputy director of Marseille Provence 2013, a German man and the former assistant director of the Capital of Culture year in Linz (Austria) in 2009. His contribution offers a means to think through how understandings and experiences of ‘Europe’ shifted urban governance and the management of social relations, as well as bringing new elite understandings of cultural value.

In the bid written in 2007/8, two years after the French rejection of the European Constitution, French bid writers asserted that the cultural project would serve to increase a European identity in Marseilles. Yet, in 2010, this speaker had been recruited to join the Marseilles team because project managers had been worried that Brussels might see their project as ‘too Parisian’. This was an impression that was circulating in both local and European circles. The Liverpudlian speaker above told me that he had heard that the Marseilles’ project was too “franco-français”.

This spokesperson was largely seen as the representative ‘European.’ He was the principal representative at European public events, including the conference described in the Introduction. Sometimes he offered critical comments on how the MP2013 project was developed. For instance, senior managers within association MP2013 were committed to using this project as a tool to promote the development of a city region; this speaker regularly asserted that the broader territorial restructuring projects were a distraction from delivering the cultural content of the programme (see Bullen 2011). Such criticisms were rarely made in the presence of local city leaders, however and, as he would admit, he had little political power within the organisation (Fisher 2013). On this occasion, the other urban decision-makers left before he began to speak.

The title of his presentation was ‘New Cultural Encounters through Marseilles-Provence 2013: some examples’. Like the municipal speaker, he produced a list of different waves of migration to illustrate the city’s multicultural nature. He went on to assert, that this “was not the problem” (an indication of the normative frames for understanding difference) in the city. He told us that the real problems were socio-economic and

72 His role was similar to that of the Liverpudlian spokesperson, whom he knew personally from having participated in the same networks.
asserted that a cultural project could not do anything about that; effectively undermining the official invocations of social benefits used to legitimise such projects (Peck 2005).

The speaker referred to transnational cultural projects that had cultural value within European networks, which I discuss below. Yet the emphasis of his talk reflected orthodox understandings of this cultural policy as a tool for urban transformation, presented in the Introduction. The choice of Marseilles for European Capital of Culture was described in terms of the city’s ‘weak’ cultural and economic position with regard to other French cities. The decision to bid for this programme was placed in the context of the ‘success’ of Liverpool and Lille, where their achievement was categorised by the numbers of tourists and participants and the capital generated. While stating that it was too soon to evaluate the success of the year, he drew on his knowledge of past Capitals and elite-driven priorities to produce a definition of what ‘success’ might mean. For him, a successful project would “change the reality and the perspective of the city”. He emphasised, for those who had not been to the city before, how much the city centre of Marseilles has changed “as radically as Berlin”.

The presentation concluded with a promotional film of the public opening ceremony, which took place on the redesigned public space of the Vieux Port. The audience was shown images of crowds of young people and families, and a close up image of two young people of East-Asian origin, against a backdrop of the illuminated harbour. In passing, the camera in this promotional video panned in on fluttering flags showing the logos of the major private sponsors of Marseilles Provence 2013: Eurocopter, La Poste, Orange, EDF, Société Marseillaise de Crédit. The association of private sector sponsors with the event had enabled city leadership to claim that it had been a financial success; that Marseilles had been reimagined as a site in which to do business. In Liverpool’s terms, it had become ‘business friendly’. Yet, as with Liverpool’s Capital of Culture project, this project had gone significantly over budget in this heavily indebted city. This burden was carried by the public budget, impacting on the funding of other social and cultural projects in the city and region, as I analyse below. Before I do so, I explore how culture was evoked by urban elites in relation to this project.
Spatialising contemporary representations of culture

Differences between the acceptation and/or rejection of multiculturalism within the narratives of the bid writers and the different speakers at the Conference in October 2013 illustrate how the social construction of social and cultural difference in Marseilles is assembled in interaction with local social histories, French Republican concepts of laïcité, national fields of cultural value, shifting policies for difference in the EU as well as neoliberal ideology. I want to conclude this section by probing elite representations of ‘culture’ more deeply in line with urban repositioning strategies.

In fact, the contribution from the MP2013 representative was the only one of the speakers to include a discussion of some cultural programming. In itself, this is significant. When I attended a Board Meeting of the MP2013, held at the Chamber of Commerce, were no ‘cultural’ institutions represented at the meeting. The closest thing to a definition of culture in the Marseille Provence bid can be found tucked away in the governing documents of the Association MP2013. There, culture was defined as including research, education, social, economic, touristic dimensions (MP2013 2009). It is a far wider definition than traditional French national cultural policy, which developed in opposition to education and social policy (Urfalino 2010). It reflects a growing public acceptence, in France, of the economic value of culture (or ‘the arts’) in generating wealth and attracting tourists; a fact embodied by the choice of President of the Chamber of Commerce as President of the association MP2013.

Different forms of cultural production were associated with the overlapping spatial policies affected Marseilles. For example, I attended a number of presentations of MP2013 projects where social-space of ‘Provence’ or the city-region was the focus. In these settings, the arts and cultural projects tended to be ‘Provençal’ rather than ‘Mediterranean’ in content (see part 3). The same was true in tourist strategies aimed at British, American and East Asian tourists. There canonical European artists popular such as Cézanne, Picasso featured prominently, along with projects that portrayed on ‘Provençal’ customs, rural landscape and traditions.

With regards to the Euromed dimension, MP2013 cultural projects were broadly constructed on developing transnational links between ‘European’ and ‘Mediterranean’ countries. ‘Local’ and everyday social and cultural networks that materialised, traversed
and constituted urban social-spaces in and beyond Marseilles, criss-crossing the Mediterranean Sea, were ignored or devalued, in favour of ‘international,’ ‘high-art’ projects. This focus on inter-cultural cross-Mediterranean networks meant that other significant regional, national and trans-national links were largely forgotten (for example shared social, cultural and economic ties between Marseilles, Catalonia and Italy, West and East Africa, China and Northern Europe). Further, the Euromed label was closely associated with a particular part of the city. Following Marseilles’ selection as European Capital of Culture, 80 percent of the new infrastructure constructed as part of the European Capital of Culture project – including the Cité Méditerranée where the conference was held – was built in the gentrified waterfront redevelopment.

The MP2013 association representative described a number of projects that were clearly chosen to respond to the expectations of a European audience. He referred to the internationally-renowned La Friche contemporary urban arts centre and emphasised the Euro-Mediterranean dimension of cultural projects, linking this to Marseilles’ geopolitical position on the Mediterranean basin. Interestingly, he highlighted artistic projects that had offered critiques of contemporary Europe, including exploring the loss of thousands of lives of those trying to reach ‘Fortress Europe’. Yet, such critical projects did not always find support locally. For example, the bid document included a proposal to organise a conference on Roma. Supported by European jury, and certain project works within the association MP2013, it was never brought to fruition because of local political opposition.

‘Popular’ versus ‘elite’ culture

Similar to Liverpool’s bid, after consultation with a range of different interest groups, Marseilles’ bid writers had described cultural production in Marseilles as a unique meld of ‘popular’ (populaire) and ‘elite’ (savant) culture (note the spatial level; ‘bourgeois’ Aix is not associated with such ‘popular’ cultural forms). There are resonances with the foregrounding of popular culture in Liverpool’s bid. However, significantly, the definition of ‘popular culture’ is less broad in Marseilles. Popular cultural forms related less to sporting practices, humour or ways of being, but rather, the production of what are described as ‘minor’ art forms, listed as graphic arts, rap, street arts and public parades. As I show below, despite the cultural revolution of 1968, the French cultural
model of disseminating ‘great’ works of art dominated cultural production in Marseilles, influenced by objectives to attract tourists.

Earlier that morning, the municipal speaker had concluded her contribution by asserting that the different “communities” in Marseilles had contributed their vision to the programming. Yet, by this social situation of the conference within time and space, the importance of questioning how ‘celebrations’ of the mix of ethnic groups in Marseilles affect opportunities for people living in impoverished areas to define and participate in dominant cultural and urban processes is very clear. A better reflection of understanding of who was able to influence debates on culture in the city was manifest in the contrast between the profile of the participants attending this fee-paying academic conference and the frontline staff. I draw on field notes to make the point.

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When I entered the Villa Méditerranée that day in October 2013 I was greeted by a group of employees, who showed me through to the auditorium where the conference would take place. In my notes, I jotted down their backgrounds as appearing of North African and white European origin; I noted their Marseillaise accents and what I called their informal ‘working class’ behaviour. I wrote that these Regional Council workers seemed to be: “real Marseillais”, although I was aware that this was a contentious statement.

Unlike the staff I had observed during a three-month internship within the offices of Marseilles Provence 2013 - most of whom were the epitome of the young, white, well-educated, ‘creative class’ - the staff at La Villa Méditerranée seemed representative of the ‘real Marseillaise’ population. That is, they reflected the profile of urban dwellers in a city where a higher proportion of residents are categorised as of a low socio-economic background than in other comparable French cities and where 12 percent of the population are migrants, 10.5 percent of the population is born outside Europe, principally from the Maghreb and where almost half of all people under 18 have at least one parent who is an immigrant (DROS-PACA 2012).

My impressions were that, similar to the event in Liverpool, the relative absence of people of visible racialised and working class backgrounds at the Marseilles conference reflected the unequal, racialised and class-inflected structures that affect who is able to
decide what, and who, is of cultural value in particular localities across Europe (Skeggs 2015, Tyler 2015).

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Comparing elite narratives and practices in Liverpool and Marseilles

There is much that is familiar in the ways in which the European Capital of Culture came to ground in Marseilles and Liverpool, and other large-scale urban development projects around Europe (Swyngedouw et al. 2002). Both Liverpool’s Albert Dock renovation and the Euromed project involved public funding to encourage public and private property-led development (Bertoncello and Rodriguez-Malta 2003). As seen in other cities with a growing focus on market-driven growth, since the 1980s these processes have been accompanied by growing commodification of real estate and rising ‘delocalisation’ of ownership, as urban policies encouraged international investors to buy up the city. In both Liverpool and Marseilles, the restructuration of forms of governance affected the look and feel of the city, resulting in “Anglo-Saxon” sanitised spaces, promoting commercial consumption and marginalising certain groups from the city centre. Despite differences in national and local frameworks for culture, there was an increasing legitimacy accorded to the culture of consumption, linked to tourism and shopping; again echoing patterns apparent in other cities around the world (Peck 2005). In both cities, urban dwellers in impoverished areas were largely excluded from the process, devalued as urban users and often faced symbolic and/or physical displacement.

Similar stories have been described elsewhere, I argue that considering these cities as situated in similar positions within historically-situated, multi-scalar relations of cultural, economic and political power can help to understand the mechanics of the ways in which culturally-inflected policy was operationalised by urban elites, during this time.

The two cities had been badly ‘wounded’ by processes of restructuring of the broader political economy, and were considered downscale in political, economic and cultural
terms. Yet, we can observe similar beliefs in the rightful place of the two cities at the top table within an international interurban league-table, because of previous positions as ‘world cities.’ These twin dynamics gave additional weight to ‘experts’ external to the city in developing culturally-inflected development in ways that responded to the demands of global capital (Schneider and Susser 2003). These ‘experts’, be it state technocrats or European consultants, were drafted into cities viewed as ‘lagging behind’, or ‘on the edge’ (Bianchini 2008). In both cities, the importance of producing a ‘successful’ mega event, led to similar emphases placed on the ‘internationalisation’, ‘professionalisation’ and instrumentalisation of the arts sector.

While these accounts are familiar ones, an ethnographically-sensitive approach to the study of representations and experiences of culture and social difference can help nuance generalisations of gentrification, highlighting variations within and between resemblances. The Liverpool section illustrated how the “tough times” of the 1960s and 1970s were used to justify contemporary entrepreneurial city strategies. That section also drew out the increasing isolation of Liverpool, as a result of the more brutal, neoliberal, ‘go-it-alone’ urban policy regime in the UK. This had implications for how culture and social relations were operationalised. As policy-makers ran after the next grant fund or private-sector initiative, narratives about place and people in Liverpool have proven fragile: City leaders pragmatically adopted new narratives and practices promoting ‘European’ and ‘national’ ideals of cosmopolitan and cultural diversity around the time of the Capital of Culture bid. Yet as the political and economic conditions changed following the 2008 financial crisis, new place-making and marketing narratives were adopted, attempting to situate Liverpool in relation to the US and China in ways that sidelined impoverished urban dwellers, and diminished the importance given to the ‘culture’ in the economy.

Marseilles’ section shows how this outside expertise was tightly linked to ‘Parisian’ ways of understanding culture and social relations, largely to the detriment of local decision-makers. Narratives adopted from the 1990s onwards about the city’s Mediterranean location that were associated with the European Capital of Culture bid had a greater stability than narratives of cosmopolitanism in Marseilles, because they were linked to broader urban repositioning strategies. In Marseilles, urban elites placed considerable importance on notions of ‘French’ culture, ideas shaped by France’s
colonial history, universal notions of artistic excellence and the central role of the state in urban policies in Marseilles. This compared to more pragmatic, instrumentalist concerns in Liverpool, though these too were inflected with traditions of multicultural policies in the UK. Together, this part of the thesis illustrates the significance of different nation-state institutional frameworks and political ideology in the governing of cities (Wacquant 2008).

The multi-scalar focus highlighted how representations of cultural diversity were tightly linked to proximity to other urban centres and processes occurring within the European or ‘Mediterranean’ sphere. It drew out the significance of international events, such as the ‘Arab Spring and the expansion of the EU in shifted Liverpool and Marseilles’ place in hierarchies of value and underlines the on-going significance of the legacy of colonialism in shaping socio-spatial relations in these former ports of empire. By comparing within and across time and space, this study illustrates how understandings of the ‘value of diversity’ for urban repositioning strategies becomes fragmented, re-appropriated or transformed in local settings. In the next part of the thesis, I consider how cultural workers and cultural work in Liverpool and Marseilles were shaped by such elite narratives and practices, when funded to carry out aesthetic interventions in impoverished parts of the city.

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Part 2: Cultural workers in impoverished neighbourhoods

La fête est finie?

In the summer of 2015, I attended a showing of a feature-length documentary entitled “La fête est finie” (The party is over), directed by Nicholas Burlaud, a young, white, male, French director living in Marseilles. The film was shown in a cinema located in the quartier of the Belle de Mai in the 3rd arrondissement of Marseilles. This cinema had started life as a neighbourhood cinema and had been transformed into a public theatre as part of the municipal cultural policy in the 1980s. Since 2014, it had reverted to a cinema space showing a mix of art-house and popular films as part of La Friche la Belle de Mai contemporary arts complex. The audience was made up of people from a range of backgrounds, most of whom were white and were involved in the arts and cultural sector in the city, or were students or educational professionals.

In the film, the horse of Troy was deployed as a metaphor to criticise the European Capital of Culture project, and the ways in which ‘culture’ and artistic interventions had been used to generate popular consent for the urban transformations proposed for Marseilles. During my research, I had been party to discussions by cultural workers and students who, like the director of ‘La fête est finie’, were highly critical of the processes of urban transformation and the role it played in contributing towards increased inequality and a growing marginalisation of the ‘classes populaires’ in Marseilles. The difference here was that, in the question-and-answer session that followed the film, Burlaud, the director, argued that the artists and cultural associations involved in the European Capital of Culture project should have been more critical about their role as agents and actors in what he described as processes of gentrification and exclusion.

Burlaud’s criticisms resonate with arguments made in critical urban studies, where the intervention of cultural workers in the city, and the new aesthetics of urban development

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73 NB. This metaphor reoccurs in accounts of culturally-inflected urban development, including in descriptions of the incorporation of arts institutions in the waterfront development in Liverpool in the 1990s (Lorente 1996)

74 Many elite urban policymakers would agree, overtly presenting the European Capital of Culture as a means to ‘accelerate’ other urban development objectives (in the words of the Liverpool representative above, it was the “rocket fuel of urban regeneration”).
are together described as contributing to processes of social displacement, and the ‘othering’ and marginalisation of disadvantaged groups and individuals from the narratives and practices of city and culture making (see Part 1 and Dávila 2012; Peck 2005; Moonie 2004; Ley 2003; Gill and Pratt 2008; Zukin 1982; 1995).

In much of the critical literature and official studies, there is a lack of clarity about the identity of the ‘creative classes’, ‘cultural workers’ or ‘artists,’ who are the focus of the critique, other than that they are usually positioned in opposition to ‘ordinary urban dwellers’ or ‘the public’ (Girel 2002). It is rare to find descriptions of the type and aesthetics of the ‘cultural work’ (though see Dávila 2012; Ley 2003) or portrayals of creative labour (Conor et al. 2015). There have been many studies exploring the effects of cultural policy, however surprisingly few take a comparative angle. Fewer still compare the multiplicity of understandings and experiences of cultural value amongst cultural workers. Consequently, not enough is known about the ways in which the social categories of cultural work and workers emerge in time and space, and how this affects the reimagining and restructuring of urban places and people. This part of the thesis attempts to address some of these issues.

Because of the focus of this thesis, I have chosen to explore the role and place of cultural workers who received public funds to carry out culturally-inflected interventions within impoverished urban areas. Of interest here is that their cultural work was the sort often presented by arts organisations or political leaders as providing a means to ameliorate the effects of socio-spatial inequalities or marginalisation.

My analysis is framed by a number of overarching questions, organised into three broad concerns. First, there is the question of who was considered an ‘agent’ or a ‘cultural worker’ of culturally-inflected redevelopment. I ask: How did understandings and experiences of Liverpool and Marseilles’ place in the world, and the transforming political economy influence such opportunity structures? Most particularly, how did the processes of urban change embodied by the European Capital of Culture project affect the formation of such subjectivities? What role did ‘race’, ethnicity, gender, age play in this? How did the relative economic, cultural and social capital of individuals affect possibilities to participate in both ‘legitimate’ and informal cultural production? And, how did this change over time and space?
Secondly, I am concerned with the ways in which cultural workers conceptualise and represent the ‘objects’ of their cultural work. Here, I investigate whether cultural workers were operating as an outsourced arm of the state. I focus on the socio-spatial categories used to describe individuals and groups with whom cultural workers were engaged. I ask: What ‘social work’ was supposed to be achieved? How did the location of the project affect such understandings? Were there changes in the terms of debate when cultural workers interacted with different groups of urban actors (funders, other cultural workers or the individuals who participated in the project)? Did cultural workers people question why participating in ‘art’ should interest those who were not part of the ‘artistic class?’ Finally, what can this reveal about the relations of power within urban cultural and social fields?

Thirdly, I examine how different cultural workers in Liverpool and Marseilles participated in, or challenged, urban transformation processes. Borrowing from the work of Jacques Rancière (2008), I explore whether ‘cultural workers’ aimed to break with the self-evidence of the ‘natural order of things.’ Did they try to challenge which groups and individuals were placed in positions of domination or compliance, which bodies were assigned a public or private life, which groups were ascribed different spatialities and temporalities, and who was given the opportunity to be seen and heard? I consider whether cultural workers shaped possibilities and understandings in terms of who could participate as an actor in the ‘cultural turn’ in urban development. I ask: Did ‘cultural workers’ aid the processes of displacement, pacification and/or gentrification? If so, how, where, when, and who benefited from these processes, and who lost out? Equally I probe when and where connections and affinities emerged between relatively privileged, yet often precariously positioned, cultural workers and vulnerable, displaced and marginalised urban dwellers. I consider whether this challenged dominant binary understandings of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (see Glick Schiller 2012 Susser 2012 [1982]).

The cases for comparison

I turn once again to the methodological approaches pioneered under Max Gluckman at the Manchester School of Social Anthropology, in adopting the ‘extended-case study’ method (see edited collection by Evens and Hendelman 2006). Exploring these cases via the variation-finding approach set out in the Introduction enables me to study the broader generalisations that underlie this thesis, namely: In what ways did the relative
location of urban spaces influence how culture and social relations were conceptualised, represented and performed in impoverished, marginalised places?

The two cases I have chosen share structural similarities. Both were funded to produce cultural work in impoverished neighbourhoods. As such, they were part of their city’s cultural ‘grant economy’ (James 2010: 179-180). In common with other grant-funded organisations in the cities, the people carrying out these cultural interventions were tied into formalised relations with the funders. These funders defined the identity and characteristics of the individuals and groups with whom the associations should work, and the social objectives that they should aim to achieve. I follow the ‘grant trail’ to examine dominant and overlapping orthodoxies underlying the ‘cultural turn’ in the multi-layered processes of urban policymaking in Europe.

Nevertheless, as in Part 1, variations in conditions and values in the cases in these two cities need to be underlined (Kapferer 2006). The Liverpool case evolved between 2005 and 2012. The Marseilles case is built on material collected while carrying out participant observation with one association between 2010-2012. There are differences in and about whether the people I study considered themselves to be ‘cultural workers’ and/or ‘artists’ or not, and the ways in which they understood the purpose of their aesthetic interventions. These and other variances serve to tease out the complex and contingent way in which ‘culture’ and aesthetic practices are represented and performed, social and spatial relations differently imagined and produced, and the different relations between ‘urban’ and ‘cultural policy’ worlds in these two (different, but similar) downscale European cities.

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Cultural production in an impoverished neighbourhood in Liverpool

Setting the scene

On 28th August 2007, I joined a group of ten women and teenage girls in the centre of a buzzing throng of people in the immense and ornately gilded reception rooms of the 19th century civic temple, St Georges Hall, in the ‘historic quarter’ of Liverpool. The women had been there since 9am, standing around a table covered with the materials of their creative labour: face paints, sponges, mirrors, towels and sprays. In front of each of them small clusters of people of different ages and backgrounds were waiting to have their faces painted in preparation for their participation in the parade that would take place later that day, as part of Liverpool’s ‘800th ‘birthday’ celebrations.

The women and girls were members - as was I - of a 30-strong face painting association, ‘Rainbow Faces Community Face Painters’. Approximately half of the members of the face painting group were white British. According to the occupational criteria conventionally used to assign social class categories, most of the group were of working class background. About half were visible ethnic minorities. Many of the members were the parents of children who attended schools just east of the city centre. The group that day reflected this mix. All members of the face painting team were wearing a light blue t-shirt with the words ‘Community Artist’ emblazoned on it.

The event was coordinated by the Liverpool Culture Company as part of the cultural events leading up to the European Capital of Culture year. In line with the new approach to funding and producing cultural projects in the city, the Culture Company had outsourced the organisation of this event to a professional art organisation, based in another part of the country. As described in Part 1, this reflected the new ‘expert’ approach to managing festivals and producing ‘culture,’ and was a source of contention for some Liverpool-based cultural workers and urban dwellers. Certain cultural workers felt marginalised by ‘external’ contractors during the Liverpool 08 events (Impact08 2009: 2), sentiments also evident in Marseilles (see below). The inclusion of this voluntary group providing a cultural service in this high profile event had become more unusual. As explored in Part 3, the involvement of ‘ordinary’ residents of Liverpool in such ‘professional’ cultural events, was increasingly as participants or spectators.
This face painting project had been instigated in 2005 as a ‘multicultural’ project initiated by the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Team of Kensington Regeneration, an urban regeneration agency working in a small area of Liverpool. One year later, with supported of staff and ‘cultural workers’ funded by Kensington Regeneration, this project had morphed into a voluntary community association, Rainbow Faces. Reflecting its roots in the BME Team, the aims of the association set out to “promote cultural diversity through the creative arts” and to use creative arts to “develop the skills and self-confidence of residents of a deprived Liverpool community”. Applications on behalf of the association were submitted for funding by the Liverpool Culture Company and other grant makers aiming to promote cultural diversity and community development through the arts.

Rainbow Faces’ presence at the city parade had been instigated by Xena, a white British woman in her late 50s, who had been recruited by Kensington Regeneration as the group’s trainer. She was also a founding member of the association. When she had first learned about the pageant she had sent an email to all members of the group, writing: “Liverpool’s 800th Birthday Pageant sounds like something we should definitely be involved in”. She contacted the Liverpool Culture Company and arranged for this to happen. After three hours of non-stop face painting, the group was spontaneously invited to join the parade through the city centre. Without their involvement in this cultural project, they would not have taken part in the civic celebrations.

The story told below offers an example of how particular forms of ‘cultural production’ and social difference emerged in a particular part of Liverpool; sometimes resonating with, sometimes showing dissonance from elite narratives and practices of social relations and culture described in Part 1. It is told from a particular perspective. From 2004 until spring 2008 I was the BME ProjectDeveloper for Kensington Regeneration. In 2008, I left Kensington Regeneration and set up as a self-employed ‘cultural worker’, active in the ‘third sector.’ One of the projects I set up was a community interest company ‘Making Faces United,’ which aimed to continue to work with face painting as

75 Taken from the constitution of the association, Rainbow Faces
76 In the UK, the third sector refers to non-governmental and non-profit-making organisations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives and social enterprises
a tool for social and artistic development. At this time, Rainbow Faces began to wind
down as a voluntary association.

I use observations of the emergence and eventual dissolution of Rainbow Faces and the
establishment of Making Faces United to explore the manifold ways in which cultural
work was being produced, instrumentalised, performed and valued across different
urban spaces, as the European Capital of Culture project was being implemented in the
city. To situate the cultural and social work of Rainbow Faces in the city, it is necessary
to introduce Kensington Regeneration.

i. Learning to see culture and social relations like an urban regeneration agency

Kensington Regeneration was one of 39 New Deal for Communities (NDC)
programmes. This was a policy initiative that had been launched in 1998 - one year after
the New Labour government had been elected to power - as part of an anti-poverty
agenda. It consisted of a ten-year funding stream (from 2000 to 2010) for small areas
identified as facing multiple forms of deprivation. To access this money, an assemblage
of ‘stakeholders’ including local authorities, public service providers, representatives
from the private sector and the ‘community’ had to come together to propose ‘local’
solutions to what were, in fact, ‘multi-scalar’ structural problems of housing and the
deteriorating physical environment, unemployment, education, crime, health and quality
of life.

When I started at Kensington Regeneration I was introduced to the official way in
which socio-spatial relations were seen and organised, made visible via colourful maps
generated by the Communications team. These maps depicted the official boundaries of
the overarching Kensington Regeneration ‘neighbourhood’ and five smaller
neighbourhoods into which the area had been divided, each managed by a different
manager. I was also given a guided tour of the streets that made up this part of the city
by one of the Neighbourhood and Community outreach workers.

The Kensington Regeneration neighbourhood and the ‘community’ were talked often
about as a ‘natural’ social space. Having only recently arrived in Liverpool and living
outside the Kensington area, I initially took these representations at face value. My understanding of the area was influenced by views I heard expressed by both elite and ‘ordinary’ urban dwellers in the city; describing the area as ‘rundown,’ violent and ‘white working class.’ In terms of cultural policy at the city level, I had some awareness of the global headlines of the European Capital of Culture bid, but little sense of how these fitted into urban regeneration in impoverished neighbourhoods. The next section describes how multiplicities of understandings of ‘culture’ and social difference contributed to the material and symbolic production of this particular area of Liverpool initially as ‘white,’ then as ‘multi-ethnic’ - affecting cultural production in that area and in relation to broader, multi-scalar dynamics of power.

**Constructing a neighbourhood**

As described in Part 1, for over 40 years urban policy-makers in Liverpool had developed an expertise and a pragmatic approach towards public urban development grants, bidding for any pot of money going. This had turned the city into a mosaic of different programmes and initiatives. (As cited above: “We’ve got this regeneration programme here, that general improvement area…You see this big white bit, nobody’s ever done anything with that, so we’ll call that City Centre East and make it our City Challenge programme”). It is no surprise, therefore, that at around the time that Capital of Culture bid writers were developing narratives of Liverpool as an example of city-centre ‘urban renaissance,’ (to use the language of New Labour’s policy of urban revitalisation) the urban policy-makers in this “most deprived” local authority in England came together to submit their bid for an area-based urban renewal programme that targeted the ‘most deprived communities’ in the country.

The area selected was an elongated wedge shape to the east of the city centre, cutting through the postcode areas of Liverpool 7 and 6. It was a predominately residential area, comprising a mix of 19th century housing stock of various quality and sizes, and some more recent housing estates built in the late 20th century. Yet there was nothing

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77 NB. In an interview, a priest who had been working in the Kensington area for many years noted a marked difference between the community development projects of the 1960s and 1970s, which tended to employ people who lived in the area, and the more recent area-based initiatives that were increasingly managed by ‘experts’ or ‘consultants’, who lived outside the area which they were ‘regenerating’ (L114). A similar change in approach occurred in France, where there was a shift away from involving local activists in urban policy in the 1970s, to a more technocratic approach (Dikeç 2006).
inherently ‘natural’ about this urban space. The Kensington Regeneration boundaries cut through the different administrative wards of Edge Hill, Fairfield, Wavertree and Kensington. It was crisscrossed with the different socio-spatial structures of urban governance that had proliferated within the city in recent years (Health Action Zones, Education Action Zones and Neighbourhood Management Areas amongst others). It dissected the spaces of everyday activity organised around streets or estates or through social and kinship networks that extended beyond the administrative boundaries, the city and the country (see Part 3).

To justify their choice of this part of the city, urban policy-makers from City Hall used Central Government statistics to define this social space as one of the most deprived areas in England, suffering from a depressed housing market, social and economic deprivation and poor environmental conditions (Allen 2008). The designated area did include areas of high levels of economic impoverishment (though not uniformly) and many people living there experienced considerable economic and social hardship. This is why most activists involved in community associations and campaign groups struggling to improve the living conditions for urban residents supported the proposal to put the area forward for the ‘New Deal’. It promised to bring additional resources into their neighbourhood, and new forms of governance with a greater involvement of local people.78

However, this narrative of urban decline alone does not explain its selection: other parts of the city, such as portions of Anfield or Everton, were technically worse off (LCC 2009 [2008]). The designation of this particular social space needs to be viewed in relation to broader urban repositioning strategies; notably, the new focus on ‘city-centre renaissance’ as a driver for urban vitality and economic and social development promoted at the national and local level (Raco and Imrie 2003; Rogers 2002). With two major arterial roads and a mainline railway track cutting through the district, this area had become to be reimagined as a ‘gateway’ to Liverpool. In light of Liverpool’s rebranding associated with the European Capital of Culture project, the Kensington area

78 NB. Significantly, the ways in which the proposal was developed failed to take account of the relatively high levels of satisfaction felt by long-term residents for a socially-connected neighbourhood with deep historical and kinship connections (Allen 2008). A number of people expressed certain qualms about the stigma that would taint their area once it was designated as requiring ‘regeneration’ (Russell et al. 2009), and were opposed to particular policies, such as massive demolition of 19th century terraces. Their views tended to be dismissed as not being representative of the ‘public interest’ (Allen and Marne 2012).
was reimagined spatially in relation to the city centre, and identified as an opportunity for investment in the housing market and as having ‘regeneration potential’ (Allen 2008: 151-152; Allen and Imrie 2012; see also Smith 1987). This resonates with practices I describe in Marseilles in Part 3.

The choice ‘Kensington Regeneration’ as the name for this urban regeneration project, a name that to outside ears connected with a very different social space of Kensington, London, was linked to these broader repositioning processes. These broader dynamics of urban repositioning influenced how local people or ‘the community’ were understood and represented.

**Imagining communities in Kensington**

It is helpful here to refer back to the discussions of the emergence of ‘community’ as a key-social sphere for government intervention in the UK, described in Part 1. As seen above, the experts involved in writing Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture bid application had appropriated the language of community circulating in national and European spheres. This combined on the one hand, rhetorical commitment to the celebration of cultural diversity and ‘ethnic communities’ (Liverpool was presented as second to London in terms of its cosmopolitan community), and the promotion of ‘community participation’. On the other hand, ‘the community’ was depicted as a social entity that needed cultural intervention and social regeneration in order for Liverpool to achieve its aspirations to be a 21st century ‘European’ city. This latter narrative gained increasing precedence in local urban policy in ways that largely displaced and devalued the cultural contributions of most ‘ordinary’ Liverpuldians from city marketing strategies.

The national ‘New Deal for Communities’ programme gave a certain prominence to participation of ‘the community’ and ‘ethnic communities’ in this urban renewal programme, in rhetorical terms at least (Raco and Imrie 2003). The ways in which understandings and representations of ‘the community’ evolved in the Kensington Regeneration NDC programme, however, were initially shaped by the particular local social histories and geographies of class-inflected and racialised relations that had developed in this city.
The number of people of non-white background living in the Kensington area made up just over 5 percent of the population. This put the area on a par with the Liverpool average (according to the 1991 UK census). Differently to the framing used at the national level, when the different urban decision-makers came together to write the bid for the Kensington New Deal for Communities project, this area was not represented in terms of ethnicity. Instead, in opposition to ‘cosmopolitan’ (racialised) Liverpool 8 (see Part 1), it was imagined as being at the southernmost part of the ‘white’ ‘north-end’ of Liverpool; seen as ‘white,’ ‘working class,’ or - in the terminology that developed under New Labour - part of the new ‘workshy’ underclass. This socio-spatial identity was not challenged, given that the majority of voluntary and community associations consulted in the process of developing the bid were made up of long-established ‘white’ British born ‘working class’ residents.

The spatial order of culturally-inflected regeneration

From the early 2000s, key strategy documents of Liverpool City Council began to link culture to the city’s social inclusion strategy. In the “socio-economic impact assessment” of Liverpool's European capital of culture bid report produced by Sadiq et al. (2003) on behalf of Liverpool City Council, which draws liberally on the orthodox ideas of Richard Florida (2002) and others. This promotes ‘culture’ as a means of boosting inter-urban competition, accompanied by a side-helping of social inclusion. New rhetoric emerged claiming that arts initiatives were embedded into the day-to-day activities of the City Council’s regeneration portfolio (Fitzpatrick 2009). The question here is; how did these filter down, affecting cultural work in this impoverished part of the city?

In the regeneration planned for the Kensington area, there was little mention of ‘culture,’ either in terms of aesthetic production or with regard to the values, traditions and practices of local people. Despite the New Labour rhetoric concerning culture as a panacea for all problems, this was not unusual in UK urban regeneration projects. On the one hand, policy documents emanating from the Department of Media Culture and Sport promoted the benefits of culturally-led regeneration for supporting city-centre renaissance and for the social inclusion of ‘hard-to-reach’ groups (Jones and Evans 2008). On the other hand, documents coming from the Department for Local Government and Communities, did not mention the arts or ‘high culture.’ There was a
significant difference here to the area-based neighbourhood renewal projects in impoverished areas of France, where the ‘arts’ and ‘culture’ have been included in programmes to develop impoverished quartiers since the early 1980s. In short, ambiguities at the national level in the UK concerning understandings about what culture was, and what it could and should do in relation to social and economic development of impoverished areas, contributed to a piecemeal implementation of culturally-inflected policy in Liverpool.

For many elites, the ‘working class’, impoverished feel of the neighbourhood, embodied by the rows of 19th century terraced houses, was counter-productive to efforts to ‘re-imagine’ Liverpool as a post-industrial, cultural and touristic destination; in other words a suitable European Capital of Culture (Allen 2008). From this perspective, Kensington was not a cultural or cosmopolitan asset in elite urban repositioning strategies: Instead was the epitome of a community that ‘needed’ to be regenerated, a place and people far from ‘culture’.

**The Liverpool arts and cultural scene, from the City Council perspective**

Given the focus on the identities of cultural workers and the cultural and social of cultural interventions in impoverished areas, it is worth a short detour here to have a broad overview of the ‘arts and cultural’ landscape of the city, and the ways in which culture and cultural work was generally understood and practiced.

As explained in Part 1, Liverpool City Council was a late developer in establishing a cultural policy framework. While largely side-lined from policymaking in the city prior to the 1990s, the shift at this point in the ideological framework for urban governance in the city, saw increasing recognition of the potential of the arts and artists in aiding urban regeneration and economic growth in the city (Lorente 1996). Once implemented, art and cultural activity quickly became part of the economic regeneration portfolio of the Council.

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79 Because I consider the grant economy of culturally-inflected development, I focus on municipal policy promoting the funding of cultural activity. Of course, individual artists, freelancers, or informal collectives, private or associative galleries, people involved in training, education workshops or youth centres, privately run theatres, music venues, on-line and print media, uses of parks and public spaces all contributed to the cultural ecology of the city.
During the time when I was working and researching in Liverpool, the municipal cultural department and the Liverpool Culture Company divided arts and cultural organisations into three groups for strategic and funding purposes. These groups were classified in relation to the size and profile of the institution. Reflecting the instrumentalist approach to culture, the first groups were described as ‘cultural drivers’, so named in relation to their impact on the city’s visitor and tourism numbers. The second groups were the ‘cultural contributors’ and, thirdly, there were the ‘grassroots’ organisations.

‘Driving’ culturally-inflected regeneration

The institutions falling within the cultural-drivers category, often referred to as the ‘Big Eight’, comprised the city’s eight major arts and cultural institutions, including the National Museums Liverpool, the Bluecoats art gallery, the Liverpool Philharmonic, the Tate Liverpool (opened in 1988 in the Albert Docks), FACT a new media and art centre (opened 2003) and the Liverpool International Biennale (launched in 1999). The cultural workers involved in these major arts institutions most predominately middle class cultural professionals, of white British backgrounds (see Griffiths, et al for a sociological analysis of the English cultural elite more generally). Most were born outside the city. To give a sense of the dominant social and cultural norms I note that in 2007 I met a Liverpool-born young man who wanted to become an arts curator who was volunteering for a number of arts organisations to gain some work experience. He told me he was deliberately trying to lose his Liverpool accent, so that he would not stand out when sitting around the table with key arts managers in the city.

An exception was the director of the National Museums Liverpool. In an interview he described himself as coming from a working class background brought up in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Prior to being recruited in Liverpool he had been instrumental in developing culturally-inflected urban development in that city, which is described has having a more socially-inclusive, well-embedded approach to cultural policy than Liverpool (O’Brien and Miles 2010).

The story of museum development in Liverpool offers an example of unexpected ways in which policy can evolve. In the 1980s, these museums were taken from municipal

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control by the Thatcher government, amid concerns that the socialist municipality might sell them. A non-departmental public body, or quango, was established in 1986 as the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, later renamed the National Museums Liverpool. The museum and art galleries are now a key feature of the new symbolic economy of the commoditised city (Susser and Schneider 2003), contributing to the city’s offer for a ‘good day out’. At the same time, the separation of these cultural institutions from municipal control meant that the museum’s leadership has been able to produce alternative, sometimes counter-hegemonic visions of cultural policy and social relations in the city. For example, there is a non-elitist approach to audience development which goes against the broader trends in the city. As described in Part 1, the museum, working with local black historians and other urban dwellers, has foregrounded Liverpool’s role in the slave trade (Small 2011). In both the Museum of Liverpool and the International Slavery Museum, the role of people of different ethnic and class backgrounds in city and culture making are given prominence. National Museums Liverpool regularly offered volunteering opportunities to members of Rainbow Faces. This example provides a reminder of how cultural institutions and cultural workers can offer counter-narratives to the hegemonic understanding of social relations.

The cultural work of cultural drivers in impoverished areas

As part of their conditions of public grants, cultural drivers had to demonstrate how they planned to include the ‘wider community’ in their cultural offer. This involved audience participation activities, work with particular neighbourhood-based associations ‘in the community’, as well as attempts to ‘expand and diversify’ their cultural offer. The Liverpool Creative Communities programme is an example of an initiative that supported cultural interventions by arts institutions within impoverished neighbourhoods in the run up to Liverpool 08. This was the project referred to by the municipal spokesperson in Part 1, and largely involved organising workshops or interventions in community centres and schools within the ‘neighbourhood’. For the record, another small cultural organisation - which also worked to deliver cultural interventions as part of this programme -, claimed that the ‘cultural drivers’ focused on

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city centre audience development above long-term social development in the
neighbourhoods (Impact08 2009).

It is important to note that broad trends to promote social inclusion and cultural
diversity in the UK have influenced and altered the role and function of cultural and arts
organisations in recent years (Ang 2005; Bennett 2013). In the context of the UK’s
multi-cultural and race relations framework; all publically funded arts work was
monitored on the grounds of ethnicity, postcode, disability, gender and sexuality. This
can encourage the development of projects in areas with high percentages of people
categorised as ‘ethnic minorities’ or projects working with particular ‘target-groups’,
such as refugees and asylum seekers. Notwithstanding this, as one of the researchers
involved in evaluating Liverpool’s cultural capital programme explained:

“The reality of how institutions such as LARC operate still gives quite a mono-
cultural edge, so that in certain environments you don’t see that much diversity.
You know in certain functions, in certain activities, it is a still quite white
dominated group”.

‘Contributing’ to regeneration

The second category of cultural workers, the ‘cultural contributors’, consisted of small
or medium-sized organisations that received public funding from the municipality and
Arts Council England to organise performance arts, festivals and to work in schools or
community centres. In 2007 many of these joined a network of organisations known as
the Cultural Organisations of Liverpool (COoL). For the record, from the early 2000s
two of the COoL members had bases in the Kensington area, supported by registered
social landlords and funding from Kensington Regeneration. The aim of COoL was to
“strengthen the capacity” of smaller organisations to participate in cultural policy
decision-making in the lead up to and following 2008. My observations of some
member organisations suggest that involvement in such organisations stemmed from a
sense of marginalisation from urban decision-making and formal cultural production in
the city.

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One difference between the LARC group and COoL was the fact that a minority of member organisations of COoL were led by people of BME backgrounds. Some member organisations had roots in the black activism that had emerged in the city in the 1980s. Several of the organisations planned festivals that overtly promoted cultural diversity. These included the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival (developed in 2000 in collaboration with local Arabic-led associations and the Bluecoat arts gallery), the Liverpool Irish Festival (developed in 2002, and which, as I describe in Part 3, has become an increasingly ‘highbrow’ city centre festival), a city centre Chinese cultural and community centre, a disabled arts festival and a gay, lesbian and transgender festival.

As with LARC, the narrative of most of the COoL workers did little to break with the self-evidence of the ‘natural order of things’. According to the website, the aim of COoL members was “to create benefits for the general public and for specific target audiences”. A spokesperson for the group described how members took “arts and cultural projects to the neighbourhoods” and, echoing the language of the European Capital of Culture bid, describing how art projects could “regenerate the workforce”. In short, much of the work of cultural drivers and collaborators mirrored dominant understandings of cultural production; as something defined by ‘professional’ artists and urban regenerations partners, and construed as in opposition to everyday social and cultural practices (Fitzpatrick 2009). In this model of culturally-inflected urban development, artists and arts organisations are placed in positions of authority in relation to their ‘target audiences’. Many publically-funded projects that encourage participation in elite, creative arts were concerned with what Foucault (1982: 790) defines as the central problem of modern government, how to change the “conduct of conduct”. Despite a different language concerning ethnicity and diversity, there were parallels here with cultural work carried out in impoverished neighbourhoods in Marseilles.

*Grassroots organisations*

According to the Liverpool Arts and Cultural Strategy, the third group of cultural producers were referred to as ‘grassroots’ organisations. This could include small arts

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organisations, voluntary and community associations with a constitution and management team, charities and, following 2003, ‘community interest companies’. Rainbow Faces applied for a European Capital of Culture grant under this funding stream, as did other groups within the dense, associative landscape in Kensington, that included groups organising youth work, amateur dramatics clubs, writing groups, local history projects, adult education projects, ethnic or religious-based activities and family fun days. Successful applicants for the small grants programmes in the European Capital of Culture year included a Welsh cultural association, an African cultural organisation regularly funded by the Arts Council England, community groups celebrating Scandinavian, Jewish and Arabic contributions to Liverpool, associations exploring local history and youth projects based on participatory video documentaries. Essentially, these cultural projects were concerned with education and social relations, rather than art/aesthetics. Most people involved in these projects were categorised as ‘participants’ rather than ‘artists’.

As illustrated in Part 1, these initiatives did not have a high profile within the presentations of the Capital of Culture programme. In the official evaluation of Liverpool 08, their contribution was excluded from analyses of the arts and culture sector (see Impact08 2009). Nevertheless, this enabled certain groups and individuals to ‘take part’ as producers of culture. It represents a notable difference to the approach adopted by the association MP2013.

**Early cultural interventions in the Kensington Regeneration area**

Following this general overview, I return to Kensington to explore how the intersection of the national urban regeneration initiative, and the idea/implementation of the European Capital of Culture bid intersected and shifted understandings of culture and social relations.

The first thing to note is that no one was championing the arts or cultural intervention when the Kensington Regeneration partnership was first established. Unlike senior and middle ranking civil servants who managed urban policy in Marseilles, there was little ‘cultural capital’ among the Kensington Regeneration management team or on the board of trustees. Three senior managers, of working class background, were co-opted from the City Council. They were all involved in the organisation of ‘working class’ culture in their private lives (as football supporters, Trade Union members, members of social
centres). Their *modus operandi* within Kensington Regeneration reflected municipal conceptions of the organisation of culture; whereby artistic activity took place in the city centre and had little to do with issues such as housing, employment or tackling crime. There was little experience of seeing social relations in terms of ethnicity or cultural diversity. The remaining senior managers were ‘regeneration professionals’ from the suburban outskirts of the city, who had no previous professional experience in the arts or cultural sector. Few of the organisation’s management team had social or professional links to city-centre cultural institutions or to the Liverpool Culture Company.

A few ‘cultural drivers’ and ‘cultural contributors’ approached the Kensington Regeneration agency in order to secure funding to carry out particular cultural projects within the area on a bilateral basis. The projects that were funded came out of the education or community budget and were justified in terms of improving aspiration and achievement, improving employability, increasing involvement in city centre institutions or aiding social inclusion. They were short-term initiatives and not part of the strategic vision of Kensington Regeneration. One COoL organisation member, based in Kensington since 2004 (after a social landlord made a Georgian terrace available as an in-kind donation), reported that they were constantly frustrated by meetings with the Kensington Regeneration senior management team. Apparently, there was little sense of what others have called the growing belief in the ‘expediency of culture’ in ‘the global era’, to borrow the words of Yúdice (2003): In short, place mattered.

“Living through change”

One of the few aesthetic interventions that did take place in the Kensington area is worth describing, as it is illustrates how certain arts interventions served to aestheticise processes of social displacement and dispossession. The project was funded as part of the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinders programme, in collaboration with Kensington Regeneration and other urban development agencies. It was a controversial scheme of demolition, refurbishment and new-build that ran in the UK between 2002 and 2011.

Essentially, experts had designated certain areas comprising rows of 19th century terraced housing as sites of housing market failure (for a critique, see Allen 2008; for a
defence, see Nolan 2010). As the process of compulsory purchase began, in the face of considerable local and national opposition, rows of houses were boarded up, awaiting demolition. A pot of money entitled ‘Living through change’ had been established to “support market restructuring and minimise the disruption to residents during the period of restructuring, when there could be higher levels of voids, dereliction and abandonment” (Russell et al. 2009: 19). Some of the money was allocated to fund artistic interventions, which were presented in terms of ‘giving a voice’ or ‘empowering’ local residents’, despite the fact that residents could not challenge the underlying logic of the programme of demolition-reconstruction (Fitzpatrick 2009).

Funding was allocated to pay for arts workshops with young people to produce images in the form of generic visions of Liverpool; the Beatles, football, the city centre skyline, that were placed in the boarded up windows of those condemned houses that lined the main thoroughfares into the city. The aim was to make the approach to the city centre more aesthetically pleasing for visitors during the Capital of Culture year. In contrast, the state of some of the less noticeable side streets where ‘ordinary’ urban dwellers lived manifested a want of investment. Similar dynamics operated in Marseilles, in the association MP2013’s Creative Quartiers project, as seen below.

When I joined the organisation in 2004, alternative narratives and representations of who and what was cultural had begun to emerge because of a combination of transformation of the international migration regime, a particular national ‘audit culture’ (Strathern 2000), national policies promoting community cohesion, and actions by individuals.

**A neighbourhood in flux**

As described in Part 1, at the turn of the 21st century there was a growth in people seeking asylum in the UK. A national scheme to disperse asylum seekers through the UK relocated approximately 2000 people to Liverpool between 2000 and 2002. Due to high levels of vacant private properties in the area, a significant number were placed in (often substandard) accommodation in Kensington, with little consultation with local service providers. This was one factor that meant that, whereas the 1991 UK Census recorded just over 5 percent of people identified as of BME background living in the area, in 2001 this figure was over 13 percent.
In parallel, the national policy framework for managing social relations was evolving. At the turn of the century, new measures were introduced to combat institutional and everyday racism. The racialised disturbances in some UK cities in 2001 and the attack on the Twin Towers in America during the same year, led to growing panic about ethnic segregation. This resulted in the development of the national Community Cohesion agenda. Together, new duties to prevent racism and increase the involvement of people of minority backgrounds were placed on local authorities and public bodies (Amin 2002). Yet in Liverpool, as late as 2006, municipal staff viewed Toxteth as the multi-ethnic part of the city, and the focus of services for people of minority ethnic backgrounds was directed there.84

Just half a mile away, local service providers and board members of Kensington Regeneration started to see things differently. From 2003, representatives from the police described a rising number of reported incidents of racism in the Kensington area.85 Other local service providers, including head-teachers, began expressing concerns about their capacity to deal with the needs of the new population.86 To different degrees, this happened elsewhere across the city. What made a difference in the case of Kensington Regeneration, was that the agency was responsible to Central Government. Every three months, senior managers had to send detailed ‘quarterly monitoring’ spread sheets to London to evaluate the success of their project against centrally-defined criteria. One dimension recorded how representative the programme was in involving people of ethnic background within decision-making processes and as ‘beneficiaries’. As the population became more ethnically diverse, the organisation was no longer performing well against these measures. The involvement of people of BME backgrounds – largely understood as asylum seekers - became a new priority for the agency. This led to the decision to appoint an ‘Asylum Seeker and Refugee outreach worker’ in 2003.

84 In a meeting in 2006, I observed the person responsible for Equality and Diversity at the municipality react with surprise when he was presented with the statistics concerning the demography of the population in the Kensington Regeneration area. He demanded to know why he had not been informed about this.
85 This is hard to compare across time, as institutional priorities and recording methods have changed.
86 The Chair of Kensington Regeneration at the time, Bishop James Jones, expressed his concern in the local press and in front of the Commons urban affairs select sub-committee about the lack of ‘local control over the number of asylum seekers’ (Hernon 2002).
Shifts in understandings of culture and community

*From refugee outreach to promotions of cultural diversity*

When initially conceived, the new post was not given much status. The worker was based within the Neighbourhood and Communities Team, which was a front-line service with few decision-making powers. Five Neighbourhood Workers were employed, all but one were born and brought up in impoverished neighbourhoods of Liverpool. All were of working class or lower-middle background and had little social or cultural capital. They were responsible for “the” community or sometimes the “mainstream” community’. Their work involved such tasks as ‘capacity building’ for voluntary or community associations, or outreach work on thematic issues such as housing and crime prevention.

In contrast, Pete, the white British man in his 50s recruited for the job was not from Liverpool. Pete had worked abroad for much of his life, employed by a number of organisations including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) working in Switzerland, China, Somalia and over thirty other countries, across four continents. He seemed categorically different from his lower or middle Liverpool-born colleagues, something well embodied by his sartorial choices. Compared to the grey suits or smart office wear that were common to other staff members, he regularly sported an African print shirt or a Chinese jacket, and had a rucksack or a plastic Kensington Regeneration bag slung over his shoulder, in which his daily copy of The Guardian and Kensington Regeneration policy papers was stuffed. Whereas all senior managers drove in and out of the area each day, he rode in on a second-hand bicycle. In short, he had a class background, worldview and aspirations that differed considerably from most workers in the organisation. The combined factors of class, cultural capital, capacities and experiences, along with a set of diverse techniques and tools, enabled him to expand the aims, objectives and

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87 As seen in Part 1, partly influenced by historically poor relations between the municipality and black people in Liverpool, this was the case with most people providing specific BME and asylum and refugee support services.
resources, beyond those which his position in the official institutional hierarchy would normally have warranted.\textsuperscript{88}

Pete's presence in the organisation shaped understandings and organisation of socio-spatial relations and cultural production. One of the first tasks he fully supported was a baseline study of the composition of the population. This would shed a different light on who was seen as living in Kensington, their socio-economic and ethno-national background and the different geographical extent of their social networks. Demographic change in the area was no longer assigned solely to the increased presence of asylum seekers. There was a new appreciation of the growing presence of international students and workers from the university hospital and the two universities situated in close proximity to Kensington Regeneration area (including considerable numbers of mainland Chinese and Southeast Asians). The data also pointed to an increase in the numbers of people born in Liverpool of BME background, who had moved to Kensington from their historic base in Liverpool 8 because of the gentrification processes to the south of the city centre. Within a week on the job, Pete recommended that his job title be changed from the specific Asylum and Refugee Support Worker to the more general ‘BME outreach worker’, to reflect this new way of seeing the world.

There was a shift in the spatial understanding of the organisation of ethnic ties. Working alongside Pete, people began to see the BME networks as extending beyond the Kensington Regeneration boundaries. His excellent capacity to work with people of a range of different backgrounds meant that he cultivated social relations with many people living and working in Kensington. This included the Yemeni shopkeeper, from whom he bought his newspaper, the owners and staff in the fourteen ‘Chinese chip shops’ from where he bought takeaway suppers after working late in the office. He had his hair cut by local Burundi and Chinese barbers, and cultivated relationships with black Liverpudlians who had previously lived in L8, white working class resident board

\textsuperscript{88} Pete’s influence was made possible by the support he had from his senior line-manager. The latter was born in one of the post-war housing estates on the outskirts of Liverpool and was of a white Welsh-Irish ‘Scouse’ working class background. Respect and friendship grew during informal conversations, not least about football, and as the manager appreciated Pete’s ideas and hard work. He often protected Pete from a sometimes hostile office environment. Together, they were able to adopt and promote new aims and objectives to i) increase BME representation, volunteering and staff, by 5 percent across the partnership (something unheard of in the city); and ii) achieve a community positive about its diversity by the end of the NDC programme.
members, as well as Liverpool-wide social, political and cultural networks that included members of socialist groups and senior representatives of many of the COoL and LARC organisations. In contrast, the ‘white’ population, continued to be imagined and targeted as if they lived their lives within the bounded space of the neighbourhood.

Exceptionally for someone in his position, Pete was given some control over a small budget, which he would use to recruit short-term consultants or volunteers, including a British-born Chinese photographer, a Zimbabwean volunteer, Congolese and Chinese trainees, British teachers and graduates looking for work experience, including from the end of 2004, me.

‘Culture’: a tool for combatting racism, celebrating diversity and community development

When I joined the agency, ‘culture’ had been recently adopted as a tool with which to achieve the social work of ‘participation’ and ‘cohesion’ by the BME outreach worker. Part of Pete’s social and ‘cultural’ work was influenced by ideas circulating at the national level about the importance of developing ‘good’ forms of social capital (norms, networks and trust) for the benefit of the ‘wider community’, or what was being termed in UK government terms ‘community cohesion’ (Crawley and Hickman 2008). The lack of BME voluntary and community associations in the neighbourhood was often seen as a sign of the lack of social capital, and a marginalisation of people of minority ethnic backgrounds from urban development processes.

A section of the BME budget was dedicated to creating new BME infrastructure that could both ‘celebrate diversity’ and support the ‘participation’ of people of BME background in the urban regeneration. During my first months with the organisation, I was tasked to make contact initially with the ‘Chinese community’ (broken down into Hong Kong Chinese, British born Chinese and people from mainland China), and then with people from Africa. This was prioritised by the size of these ‘communities’ according to baseline data. This was the first step. The second involved encouraging these new ethnic groups to contribute to the wider regeneration of Kensington, by encouraging involvement in celebratory ‘bridging’ activities that could transcend social cleavages. The ‘cultural’ aspect of this activity was embodied in the new annual calendar of events that we developed. This was entitled the ‘Kensington Cultural Calendar’ or, making a direct allusion to the narratives of culture that emanated from
the European Capital of Culture programme, and helping to generate support for what was an ‘out of the ordinary’ approach to community development that we were developing in Kensington, we sometimes called, ‘Kensington: World in One Community’.

In parallel, the BME team developed one-off projects with LARC or COoL organisations. We would identify cultural productions that complemented the BME agenda. For example on one occasion Pete arranged for a local Roma band, whose lead singer was a student in a Kensington school, to perform in the foyer, prior to the showing of the film ‘Gypsy Kings’ at the Philharmonic. Post-show discussions with Rwandan refugees were organised following plays on the Rwandan genocide, at a city centre theatre, with Kensington Regeneration partners, board members and Kensington residents invited to attend. These projects took place predominately because of social ties between the BME team and the cultural institutions. In broad terms, we shared similar class backgrounds. Conversely, it was harder to develop a working relationship with the Liverpool Culture Company. In part this was because of the different social and cultural background of many the Liverpool Culture Company employees. In my case, I found I had less affinity and shared less cultural capital with these workers than with the staff of arts organisations. As with the person described in Part 1, many were trained cultural workers and were more technocratic in approach than most city-centre arts organisations. They were driven by the larger dynamics of ‘their’ festival, the importance of raising the profile of the city and were less flexible about developing low-scale initiatives in the neighbourhoods. They were also very difficult to reach via telephone or by mail.

Additionally, Pete drew on the resources of his personal and professional networks and ‘his’ BME budget to pay for artists of ‘BME backgrounds’ to perform in schools and events in the area. Certain local schools followed, or were already involved in developing, similar approaches, funded by the Arts Council and local education budgets. This occurred particularly during periods such as Black History Month, but additional attention and focus was provided through diversity of backgrounds of ‘cultural workers’ operating at the local level.

Further, reflecting ‘cultural projects’ elsewhere ‘in communities’ or ‘in neighbourhoods’ across the country, the Kensington Regeneration BME team also
funded ‘folk’ or everyday ‘cultural’ activities such as cooking, story-telling and sport. These served to encourage different groups to meet and work together to overcome prejudice, promoting ‘bridging ties’ that could transcend ethnic, social and cultural difference. This is where - initially - the face painting project fitted in.

**Face painting as a cultural and social project**

The face-painting project emerged after observations made at the Kensington Cultural Calendar and the Kensington ‘Summer Fun Day’. Pete noted that the face painting stand had been popular with people of different ethnic backgrounds and ages, particularly young children. He noted a shortage of people with the skills to do face painting. The decision was made to set up a training course in this popular, creative art form. In terms of the cultural and social work it was supposed to achieve: people from different ethnic backgrounds were to be recruited to this, helping to “break down barriers” between them. It was also seen as a means to develop skills that would increase residents’ ability to participate and volunteer in ‘the community’ Equally, reflecting the new language of economic sustainability in the voluntary sector, the project was considered a means to support revenue generation, aiding local associations to become financially sustainable and viable in the long term. I was assigned the task of developing this project.

**The cultural workers of the face painting project**

I embarked on the task of setting up a face painting project with no prior experience. I shared a similar class background, educational capital, and cosmopolitan aspirations with Pete. In terms of understanding social relations, I was broadly supportive of the idea of ‘urban regeneration’ and considered ‘community cohesion’ a positive goal, without questioning its ontological basis. While not as reductionist as this, my official thinking could be summed up by what Binnie and Skeggs (2004: 46) describe as middle-class assumptions that people of (white) working-class background are associated with the reactionary politics of nationalism, rather than the more progressive politics of cosmopolitanism. While I shared an educational capital with elite cultural

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89 NB. This event was organised by the Kensington Regeneration Communications Team. Rather than asking the ‘community’ to organise the social activity, a ‘professional’ PR company was paid to coordinate the event. This reflected a different ethos to that which governed Pete’s work, where the focus was on developing ‘local capacity’ to organise ‘sustainable’ events. Distinct and competing normative frameworks existed within this complex institution.
workers, I had little sense of myself as a ‘cultural worker.’ In this job, I would become an unwitting cultural worker, within a state organisation that was rolling out a programme of urban regeneration. My understandings and experiences of social difference and cultural values would change over time, as I interacted with different individuals and groups living and working in this part of the city, most notably with the key cultural worker of the project, Xena.

Xena was a registered face-painter with a national face painting association. She had first turned to face painting to help out at her children’s social events. She began using this skill ‘professionally’ when she was looking for a means to increase her confidence and earn money. When I met her she was participating in national and international face painting networks, as an artist and a trainer. She made her living through irregular contracts, face painting for public and private companies. According to Liverpool City Council definitions (in a categorical system that is much more flexible than in France), Xena was a ‘professional’ artist because she was paid for the creative work that she did.

Xena came from a different socio-economic background to mine, and we often differed in our views of the world. When I met her she lived in a middle class suburb outside Liverpool. She had been born and raised in a poor, working class family in North Wales. Her norms and value-system were composed of what some have characterised as ‘working class’ concerns of self-reliance, self-improvement and independence, coupled with a ‘down-to-earth’ understanding of the importance of money, and a practical generosity (Skeggs 2011). While she had always been considered ‘artistic’ or ‘creative’ in her personal milieu, and while she placed great value on creativity, she did not describe herself as professional. Like many – although not all - of the participants in the face painting project, Xena was sceptical about the value of the national rhetoric and practices promoting multiculturalism and community cohesion.

The work of the project

I organised training sessions at different venues in the Kensington area and recruited people via various networks which I describe in Part 3. Initially the training involved short one-off courses and sporadic volunteering opportunities in the Kensington area. Drawing on her own experience, Xena identified that if the training were to be meaningful, the course should be longer. This was to enable trainees to develop skills in the creative arts, build their confidence and form “more significant” relationships. Later,
longer training courses were arranged, spread over six days. The training focused on issues of health and safety, communication skills, tips and techniques for applying face-paint and a design element. Regular volunteering opportunities were set up across the neighbourhood and the city. As the project developed, special workshops were organised to develop particular designs, often linked to a festival or cultural event.

Xena encouraged me to fundraise, to run additional training and so that all students could be provided with their own face painting kits, enabling them to practice their skills outside the training course. In order to access funding we invited course participants to form an association. In early 2006, ‘Rainbow Faces’ was established. Over time a core group of approximately thirty people, mostly women and teenage girls, living predominately in the Kensington NDC area, became members. They participated in the running of the organisation and volunteered regularly in various cultural events across the city.

ii. Rainbow Faces: beginning to see like ‘the community’

*The grant economy of multiculturalism/cultural diversity*

At the early stages, Rainbow Faces was very closely tied to the Kensington Regeneration BME agenda. I continued to function as an intermediary between the group and public funders, was instrumental in writing the governing documents for the group and initially provided the administrative support (setting the agenda for meetings, writing the minutes and bids). On behalf of the group, I wrote bids that were submitted to a range of funders who could provide grants, (often one-off grants), of between £2000-£10,000 to small groups that were constituted as a formal association. Funders included Kensington Regeneration, local social landlords, the municipality, the local Primary Care Trust, organisations allocating funding from the European Social Fund, national organisations such as the National Lottery Fund and the Liverpool Culture Company.

To win money, I would unthinkingly use the language that I had learned on the job. ‘Seeing like a state’, the project was deliberately linked to one particular social-space, ‘a deprived Liverpool community’. Like other cultural workers I met who were employed by city centre cultural institutions, when applying for funding or discussing projects the language I used implied that people ‘in the community’ lived spatially-bounded, non-
cultural lives. Influenced by the community cohesion agenda, the bid text described social relations in the Kensington Regeneration area as ridden with racism and lacking ‘cohesion’. For instance, in one bid I noted that: “not enough has been done to address BME inclusion and to promote diversity issues in Kensington”. I would highlight instances of racism, citing statistics from the Merseyside Police “that more racial incidents are reported in the Kensington ward than anywhere else in Liverpool”. As I evident in a letter drafted on behalf of Kensington Regeneration in 2006, to support an application for funding to the Liverpool Culture Company/Liverpool City Council, I represented residents of the area as living segregated lives with little exposure to ‘city-centre’ cultural activity:

“This [face painting group] has had a stall at both the 2006 African Kensington Festival and the Liverpool Arabic Festival. Many of the group who took part in the event have had little exposure to multicultural events. Indeed, some of the Kensington residents had never been to Sefton Park [a park in south Liverpool] before. This project is a successful model of how the creative arts can bring people together from different parts of the city and from diverse cultural backgrounds, and provides a strong example to the wider community of the value of diversity”.

Further, I developed a budget line for ‘diversity social events’, to provide a space for members to socialise that reflected and reinforced a dominant ‘multicultural’ paradigm.

Challenges to "socially-engineered” multiculturalism

These diversity social events were developed because trainees and volunteers had expressed a desire to have the opportunity to get to know each other outside of training and face-painting activities. As noted, these were initially shaped by my focus to promote ‘positive attitudes to diversity’. From a position of relative power, I identified those members whom I considered as being of BME background, to organise a variety of social events at which they could present and celebrate ‘their culture’. Initially, I was unconscious of the ways in which this form of multiculturalism was a boundary-making process that could ignore the shared commonalities in people’s everyday lives (see also Anthias 2013).
After a series of these events, one member, Liz, a white British woman whom I describe in more detail in Part 3, asked in one of the Rainbow Faces’ committee meeting why there was never any celebration of ‘English culture’. The members voted for Liz to coordinate a, ‘English’ social event. She arranged a trip to a privately-run theatre that specialised in what I judged as ‘lowbrow’ comedy musicals, generally excluded from the formal lists of the city’s cultural institutions. It was deemed successful and she was requested to organise others. The subsequent outing was to an all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet restaurant.

In many ways, Liz’s events proved more inclusive and more popular than some of the more stilted ‘multicultural’ activities that I had orchestrated; events that Xena referred to as “social engineering”, and which she associated with the ‘nanny state’ of New Labour Britain. Conversely, I often felt out of place in these ‘popular’, ‘boisterous’ settings, far more so than during the ‘diversity’ events that were often organised by migrants of similar educational background to myself, who exhibited similar ‘middle class’ traits of politeness and reserve. Two points are worth drawing from this. Firstly, as well as challenging my judgement of what is constituted ‘good taste’, the appropriation of these social activities by the group offers a small example of how people of low socio-economic status can challenge and be critical of hierarchies of power.

Secondly, it was by participating in interventions such as this, combined with interactions with Xena and other members, that led me to think more critically about how multicultural and multi-ethnic policies often position people of white, working class background as ‘non-cultural’ and ‘non-ethnic’. On another occasion I talked to a local white British resident who was a representative of one of the grant-making boards in the area. He told me that he was fed up with having to read bids that described where he lived as deprived and racist. I came to understand that, while racism and deprivation were real issues in the neighbourhood, I was representing this area in ways that ignored how people actually live, how space and place is actually experienced and created, and the forms of ‘everyday lived social cohesion’ that I describe in more detail in Part 3. Over time, such incidents incited me to reflect more critically upon what I now see as the ‘symbolic violence’ of the language of community cohesion that I used. Nevertheless, for the most part, I continued to describe socio-spatial relations in a language that stigmatised Kensington, problematising social difference pragmatically. I
would see similar ‘strategic’ patterns adopted by cultural workers in Marseilles - to enable the association to access funding.

Xena’s contribution to the development of Rainbow Faces had a profound influence on the cultural work of the project. Her objectives differed from those of Pete’s and mine in that she was often sceptical about the multicultural agenda behind the project. Yet she saw the value of the course for individuals, partly because she knew how much she and her family had benefited from this creative practice. To develop the course, she drew on her own experiences as a woman, a mother, and as someone who had experienced financial impoverishment, growing self-confidence, and who knew the pleasure of learning a creative activity. Her aim and pleasure was in seeing “people blossom”, be it young teenagers with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Eritrean asylum seekers with limited levels of English, timid Indian graduate students, or parents of local school children from a range of backgrounds. Xena enjoyed helping them to realise that they had a creativity and an artistic ability that they had never imagined; that they could be ‘artistic’. For her, the ‘diversity dimension’ (for example I asked her to develop ‘African’, ‘Polish’, and ‘Chinese’ designs for different festivals) was an aesthetic challenge like any other, not necessarily a vehicle for expressing cultural difference.

Equally formative was Pete’s non-bureaucratic attitude to developing projects influenced by the national community cohesion agenda. He had an internationalist, pragmatic approach that extended far beyond the remit of the regeneration area. For example, when working alone in the office late at night, he permitted people from a range of backgrounds and from across the city to use the photocopying machine, telephone or computers in the offices, be it a charitable association led by West Sudanese refugees with members across Merseyside established to support people in Darfur, a Zimbabwean business man developing his CV or a Congolese woman wanting to organise a fashion show. In practical and down-to-earth ways, this led to new opportunities for people of different ethnic backgrounds to develop their own social, economic and cultural networks in and beyond the city, in ways that transcended the area-based, top-down approach of the regeneration agency.

Influenced by Pete and Xena’s non-bureaucratic practices, I invited people to join the project who were not ‘ordinary’ objects of the urban regeneration funding, including
people of middle class backgrounds living outside the area. Over time I began placing terminology such as ‘BME’ or ‘community’ in quotation marks. I began to question why it was only economically impoverished people who had to be ‘cohesive’, why these policies did not target individuals like Xena and myself, who would walk or drive into the ‘regeneration area’ to do our social work.

*Experiencing diverse hierarchies of cultural value*

After two years Xena persuaded me to partake in the six-session training course. My instinctive reaction was to dismiss this opportunity. I had a visceral sense that ‘this was not for me’, In retrospect, I analyse my reaction to be informed by my understanding that I was the agent of a culturally-inflected policy and not an object or ‘beneficiary’. This reaction reflected my perceptions of the social distance between ‘people in the community’ and myself. It also reveals the aesthetic value I assigned to this particular art form. Influenced by my class-inflected sense of aesthetics that instinctively responded more to the ‘cultural offer’ provided by city centre arts institutions, I considered face painting as somehow ‘popular’, and ‘other’.

However, motivated by my respect for Xena’s creative skills, as well as the potential this art-form offered for me to earn some money, I signed up to a six session training course. The embodied experience of sitting alongside the different course participants in a cramped social centre, and participating in informal conversations with other trainees, experiencing both doubt about my artistic ability and pleasure when I learnt a new design or technique, as well as the subsequent volunteering and paid work that I did alongside members changed my way of seeing the world. I began to see face painting, not as a ‘multicultural tool’, nor as a means of learning about diversity, but as a creative art form.

Further, while social relations with individuals continued to be structured by class and professional status, I began to have something more in common with the people I had previously written about - and who were described in elite narratives - as being ‘marginalised’ from culture and economic networks. I was no longer seeing people in terms of an essentialised identity based on ethnic difference: I began to sense a shared feeling of the pleasure involved in aesthetic and social activity, aspects that I had missed when focusing on the abstract morals of ‘community cohesion’. This occurred
especially when I went on to volunteer alongside other members at different face painting events.

Volunteering was a key part of developing and experiencing social and economic relations, and I discuss this in Part 3. Initially I had attended events in my capacity of Kensington Regeneration project officer, helping with logistics and monitoring. After the training I participated as a volunteer, wearing the Community Artist t-shirt alongside other members, and receiving the £5 volunteer expenses. Again, this gave me a sense of parity with other participants, and I learned respect for different members’ capacities for sociability. It was when working as a face painter at a city centre event such as the event described at the start of this section, organised by the Liverpool Culture Company mentioned above, that I noted a sense of how location mattered in structuring hierarchies of cultural value. At ‘community events’, the t-shirt was a symbol of our skill and creativity. At many city centre events, I sensed that I was coming into contact with the narratives of professionalism and high art that tended to dislodge ‘ordinary’ residents from the vision of the cultural and economic future of the city.

iii. No pot of gold at the end of the rainbow: Experiencing the precarity of cultural entrepreneurs in Liverpool

Experiencing growing socio-spatial fragmentation of urban development

In 2008, I ended my contract with Kensington Regeneration. I had become frustrated with the bureaucratic hierarchy and an underlying hostility towards the BME agenda, which for some senior managers was considered a distraction from ‘mainstream’ urban regeneration. I was tempted by a more precarious, ‘creative’ existence (Boitanski and Chapello 2005), and set myself up as a self-employed worker in the third sector economy. Xena and I decided to further develop the face painting training model and we set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) to do so. Making Faces United CIC (MFU) was formally established in 2008, the year Liverpool was European Capital of Culture. Here I quickly picked up shifting cultural values and organisation of social difference, beyond the Kensington Regeneration project.

A new culture for cultural production

The business model that was chosen reflected the dominant neoliberal narratives that existed at that time, in the UK and around the world (see Evans and Shields 2000),
where a plethora of measures were introduced to incite charities, voluntary associations and social enterprises to become more ‘professional’ and business-like, to generate profit, and to be less reliant on public grants. In Liverpool, the municipality and charity support sector strongly embraced this orthodoxy (see Part 1). There was support for business start-ups and self-employment in Liverpool, in this city in which, despite years of publicly-funded regeneration, unemployment remained above the national average (LCC 2009). This involved small start-up grants and business planning services proffered by an array of public-private partnerships, agencies and third-sector organisations.

No longer working for Pete, I came to appreciate the certain autonomy I as a member of the BME Team, somewhat shielded from the stultifying administrative culture of the Council’. Conversely, as a free-lance cultural worker, I was exposed to the increasingly competitive funding environment for cultural work. Not only was the local authority dealing with a £20 million shortfall left after the delivery of the European Capital of Culture project (Mathiason 2007), but across the country “public sector cuts that were beginning to bite” (see Part 1).

Like many others in the swelling ranks of the self-employed, our incomes did not provide us with a living wage. Our earnings were topped up with working tax credits, and informal part-time work. Xena continued her work as a professional face painter, and I occasionally accompanied her. We were only able to survive financially because we worked from home. In financial terms, we were worse off than some of the ‘beneficiaries’ we were supposed to be helping (Jurik 1998). I discuss this more in the conclusions of this part of the thesis.

The shifting gaze of the state

When the organisation was set up, I was still thinking like (one part of) the state, using terminology picked up in Kensington Regeneration to describe the objects and objectives of the face painting company. The objectives of Making Faces United were to work with:

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90 I came to realise how significant this was when working with municipal bodies as a freelancer.
“In particular (but not exclusively) women, people from Black or minority ethnic (BME) communities, people in deprived neighbourhoods and those not in employment, education or training”.

When no longer working under the auspices of the 'BME team’, I came to learn that the focus on ‘diversity’ was very site-specific in the city. In the face of reduced budgets, a partnership was formed between the municipality and the local health service providers to continue to deliver cultural activities. A new focus was placed on the health related impacts. Community cohesion and cultural diversity were still objectives, but the emphasis was reduced.

Post 2008, policies and funding for ‘cultural’ and ‘social’ work shifted locally and nationally. A central plank of Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government was the rhetoric of a communitarian ‘Big Society’, which promoted collective values of civic involvement and volunteering. This policy was not backed up with sufficient resources for third-sector organisations (MacMillian 2013). Institutions such as museums, theatres and libraries, which had previously paid a nominal fee to cover the cost of the volunteer face painting service, saw their budgets cut or frozen. The ability of MFU to provide volunteering opportunities for trainees was hit by these changes. We were less able to offer trainees placements in the city centre. When we did organise volunteer placements, I was no longer able to arrange for a minibus to pick up members close to where they lived and transport them to the city centre, raising the barriers for those members who did not have their own transport, with a significant knock-on impact on participation.

Finally, whereas in 2008, there were few criterion specifying the quality of the ‘cultural work’ attached to the grants grassroots cultural production. However subsequent cultural policy strategies for grassroots projects insisted that projects work with professional cultural workers, produce high-quality arts and creative projects that animate public spaces (LCC 2011). Opportunities for ordinary people to participate in city centre cultural activities - such as the Liverpool 800th birthday parade with which this extended case study began - became less common.

91 Making Faces United Community Interest Company Memorandum and Articles
As my livelihood was dependent on my raising grants, I noted a greater pressure to justify our cultural production in terms of the objectives of the different organisations for which we worked. To reflect the growing need to present the project in terms of the logic of the labour market, responding to government targets to raise ‘educational attainment’ and increase ‘employability’, we developed an accredited training course and put in place the systems to be registered as a nationally-recognised training centre that could tender for contracts with organisations.

As Xena and I focused on achieving targets for a number of different funders and partners, there was less time to support volunteers and the development of Rainbow Faces. We became more and more ‘outcome orientated’. Relations continued with a number of individual members of the voluntary association, but we no longer participated in the monthly meetings of the voluntary association. For a while meetings would continue in a local pub or members’ houses. Certain individuals, mainly a group of close friends and family, continued to face paint at public and private events across the city, as a means of earning some income. However, as funding dried up, the lifeblood and social work of this project that had started out as a creative arts project to promote cultural diversity, and which had offered some new forms of being incorporated into the city, slowly ebbed away.

Summary
This account of a ‘low-scale’ cultural initiative in Liverpool offers a relational, partial view of cultural value and social relations in one impoverished part of the city. In many ways, the face painting project felt very different from elite descriptions of social relations and culture described in Part 1. Yet this extended case illustrates the particular way in which social and cultural identities of Kensington and people living in Kensington and opportunities for participating in cultural life of the city were tied to broader multi-scalar urban restructuring intertwining together the language and performance of community cohesion, urban regeneration and cultural diversity. Further, the longitudinal nature of the case also reveals how over six years, the ways in which representation and value was accorded to cultural production in impoverished areas shifted, in relation to broader political and economic changes.

In ways that echoes processes described in Marseilles, this case study documents how privileged class position, ethnicity and historically-situated racialised relations continue
to structure the identities of cultural production in the city and the ways in which the politics of austerity increasingly marginalise local and ‘low-scale’ forms of cultural production. It also underlines the importance of paying attention to the particularities of the politics of place making when analysing how culturally-inflected urban development comes to ground.

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**Cultural production in impoverished neighbourhoods of Marseilles**

Unlike the face painting project, the association I examine in Marseilles was explicitly ‘artistic’. Named ‘T.Public, Association d’idées’ (T.Public), the organisation was a small street theatre (*arts de la rue*) company, established in 2004 by a ‘professional’ artist in Marseilles, with the stated objective to serve as a laboratory to explore the role of actors within urban spaces. The association’s activities were financed predominately by public grants, and one-off commissions for performances in public spaces. In Liverpool terms, this organisation would have been considered a ‘cultural contributor’. In Marseilles, it was a small part of the dense and fragmented performing arts scene, which extended from small or one-person initiatives to larger collectives, associations or structures of regional, national or transnational scale.

**Setting the scene**

I came into contact with T.Public in September 2010, just after my arrival in Marseilles. Flicking through a local newspaper, looking for stories, projects or organisations that might touch upon my research, I saw an announcement for two showings of a performance entitled ‘Fashion Parade: A Collection of Men and Women’ (*Défilé de marques: Une collection d’hommes et de femmes*). The graphics that accompanied the announcement were photographs of 64 residents from in or near Marseilles, who had participated in what was called a ‘casting of citizens’ (*casting citoyen*).

It was the subject of the performance, concerning the ‘body’ (*le corps*), the city and the wider capitalist economy (*le monde marchand*) that first caught my attention, as well as the diversity of people who featured in the photos. I later learned that people had been recruited via public announcements in the local media to attend a photo shoot. In
accordance with the terms of the public funding that paid for the work, all the sessions took place in the arrondissements to the north of the city, in what are generally known as ‘les quartiers nord’, a part of the city often racialised and criminalised in popular opinion (see Part 1). Each participant was asked to bring with them an object that ‘marked them’ in some way. After a short interview, which included the question on what was “capital” for them (a direct reference to the European Capital of Culture project), each person met with a professional make-up artist, after which their photo was taken. Photos on the post included a white French former dockworker, who had brought the hook he had used to unload cargos as his object, a young French woman of North African origin in fencing attire, who posed with her épée, a young black Frenchman, wearing headphones, an Algerian mother and her daughter, an older white Frenchwoman with a crutch and a white English exchange student dressed in retro-chic.

As was clear from the logos visible at the bottom of the announcement, a range of different organisations had funded the project, including: the French Ministry for Culture and Communications, the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities (ACSE), and politiques de la ville funding, that is the area-based funding for social development and cohesion in impoverished areas funding and funding for cultural development from Central Government’s regional arts body, the DRAC and the municipality of Marseilles. Support had also been provided in-kind by organisations from the associative sector, a private multi-national company and three local arts institutions, including La Friche, where the first performance I saw was staged. This cultural production thus serves as an optic to explore multi-scalar, political, economic, cultural and social fields that cut to the heart of this thesis.

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On the night of the performance, temporary seating had been set out in the courtyard of La Friche, in front of a catwalk made out of large blocks of rubbish that had been sorted for recycling. Once the audience had taken their seats, over fifty individuals acted out a number of ‘fashion parades’ that had been intensively rehearsed for two weeks before this at La Friche. The first collection involved the performers striding frenetically down the catwalk to strident music, their heads covered by bags from various high-end boutiques, with a burqa-like slit for their eyes (a form of headdress officially banned in France by the French government in July 2010), stopping at the end of the catwalk to
strike poses in front of the public. Other collections involved performers working with the dismembered limbs of mannequins, that served as weapons or crutches, and a collective stripping off of layer upon layer of clothes, which were subsequently picked up by two performers pushing buggies and evoked the presence of rubbish sorters, predominately from east Europe, who have been a daily presence on the streets of Marseilles for over a decade. During the spectacle, extracts were played from a recording of Guy Debord reading the introduction of his 1963 Marxist critique of contemporary consumer culture, ‘Society of the Spectacle’. The piece ended with all the actors dressed in white, dancing to a rhythmic beat, before assembling in the centre to form a tableau evoked the famous painting by Eugene Delacroix of Marianne, a woman personifying the Goddess of Liberty and national symbol of the French Republic leading the people in the revolution of 1830.

Distinct from events I had organised in Kensington Regeneration, there was no formal registration form to record statistics about the profiles of performers or the public. The majority of the performers were ‘citizen actors’ who were recruited from the original two hundred and forty people who attended the casting. They were accompanied by a number of ‘professional’ actors. I picked up, from interactions observed after the show and subsequent conversations with participants, that the audience consisted mainly of family members and friends, of some people often referred to in the media as “bobos”, some local Councillors and funders, as well as a few curious kids, who had just slipped in. For a short period, this event had brought together a wide section of urban dwellers in the same social space.

The fieldwork

I met Thierry, the artistic director of the artistic company, a few days after the performance. He was a white Frenchman in his early 40s, with intense blue eyes and tousled hair. Like a number of cultural workers I met, Thierry was concerned about the impact of MP2013 and had a collection of newspaper articles and city-marketing

92 Bobo, which stands for a bourgeois Bohemian, is an informal term to describe people of middle-class background with considerable cultural capital, often the cultural values of the counterculture of the 1960s and less economic means. The term is often used to describe the ‘typical’ user of La Friche, placed in opposition to ‘ordinary’ residents of the quartier (Berneron 2011; Collet 2015).
materials of the Marseilles-Provence Capital of Culture project. After an informal interview, he agreed that I could carry out participant observation with his organisation.

I draw on many hours of participant observation in Thierry’s apartment-cum-office and my involvement in a subsequent revised performance of Défilé de marques, combined with observations of a number of different arts projects and cultural workers in order to begin to describe the cultural and social work of cultural projects in impoverished areas of Marseilles. I develop this in Part 3. The particular emphasis of this section is to situate Thierry and other artists working in impoverished neighbourhoods in relation to the broader political economy leading up to the period of the European Capital of Culture year, including processes of gentrification and factors structuring the identities and possibilities of people and groups funded to carry out cultural interventions as part of area-based urban development policies.

**Incorporating alternative cultural production into urban governance (1980s-)**

In common with the majority of cultural workers whom I met, Thierry was not from Marseilles. He had moved to Marseilles as new opportunities for creative workers emerged in two artistic movements, in which he was more or less loosely involved: street theatre (théâtre de la rue) and the Nouveaux Territoires de l’Art (New Territories for Art). Both artistic currents emerged from counter-cultural artistic practices brought about by the artistic critique of the stultifying, hierarchical structures of the post-war years (Ingram 2009).

**Street theatre**

Street theatre began to be noticed on the Marseilles arts scene towards the end of the 1980s. Around this time, a number of street theatre companies relocated to Marseilles, drawn to the city by the clement climate and the availability of abandoned, brownfield sites as ‘alternative spaces’ in which to create their large sculptures or to rehearse. Prominent here were a group of cultural workers who squatted a huge abattoir, which had closed in 1989 and was situated in the 15th arrondissement of Marseilles, otherwise known as les quartiers nord. During the next 20 years, various street theatre companies, circuses, artists and musicians stored their theatre props there, and used the former

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93 He told me later that he had agreed because I had used the word ‘discourse’ when discussing my project.
slaughterhouses as workshops, a live-work base and a site for expositions and parties, from across Europe and beyond (Vidal nd). While still based in Paris, Thierry was hired as one of many actors involved in national and international social networks and in one-off projects for some of the most well-known companies.

The irregular tenure of the street theatre companies might suggest that this cultural movement was operating in parallel with mainstream urban development in the city. Indeed, when they first emerged, such alternative arts movements were treated with some suspicion by political and economic leaders in the city (Pinson 2002). However, the significance of the story told here is about the ways in which such ‘counter-cultural movements’ were - almost from the start - interlinked within local and national urban and cultural policy objectives.

For example, the abandoned abattoirs that were squatted in by the cultural workers were the responsibility of the municipality. Twenty years rolled by before the municipality decided what to do with the eight hectares of industrial wasteland in the ‘low-value’, ‘down-scale’ quartiers nord. Yet, underlying the inertia of the municipality was a passive tolerance for the presence of these particular occupants. This was reflected in the maintenance of a water supply, electricity and even the presence of a security guard who staffed the site (Vidal nd). Many saw this as urban elite policy-makers opting for what they considered the least worst option until they came up with a better plan for the site (see Pinson 2002). Accepting the presence of cultural workers prevented the site from being transformed into a mosque or an informal flea market by the residents living just opposite, in one of the longest high-rise blocks of social housing in Europe.

These cultural workers were well-enmeshed in national and European networks where ‘culture’ (or the arts) was increasingly understood as having economic potential for urban development. Many were part of formal associations that enabled them to bid directly for public monies from the French ministry of culture and apply for funding from area-based urban social development grants that support cultural activities in impoverished neighbourhoods. Some individuals involved were also involved in

94 To contextualise these processes, it is helpful to think back to the Introduction. 1990 was the year in which cultural and urban operators in Glasgow began to develop new European networks of policy-makers during the 1990 European City of Culture event. Liverpool developed its first Arts and Culture policy in 1987.
lobbying nationally and locally for support for their cultural activities. As was occurring in other cities in advanced capitalist states, cultural workers in this movement benefited from new, creative city policies that aimed to further competitive urban repositioning and positioned cultural workers as intermediaries between the ‘state’ and people living in impoverished, ‘racialised’ ‘a-cultural’ parts of the city, albeit while living in the interstices of the urban fabric (Mayer 2013).

Nouveaux Territoires de l’Art

The New Territories for the Art movement emerged at around the same time. Again, the movement involved elite, highly educated artists (I discuss the identity of cultural workers below), many from outside the city, this time working in the field of visual and performing arts and seeking alternative spaces in which to create artwork.

I note here that elite ‘Parisian-trained’ cultural workers have long contributed to Marseilles’ low-scale position within national cultural fields. One middle class artist I interviewed in 2011 had moved to Marseilles in the 70s. In part, he like others at this time of cultural and social ferment, was trying to escape the stultifying, standardising cultural values of post-war France. He arrived in Marseilles city at a time when state and municipality funding for culture and the arts was increasing, in line with national policy. Reflecting a hierarchical and colonially-inflected lens often used when discuss Marseilles, he described the arts scene in what he described as an “African city” at that time as a “black hole”. Similarly, I often heard Thierry and other cultural workers talk about the defectiveness of the ‘cultural offer’ in Marseilles for what was supposedly France’s second city.

Like the street theatre workers, these cultural workers were well connected in multi-scalar networks, including Europe-wide bodies such as the Trans Halles Europe. The latter was a network set up in 1983 to exchange knowledge and practice about transforming former industrial buildings into contemporary ‘independent’ cultural centres. The most well-known example in Marseilles is La Friche.

The New Territories for the Arts emerged at a time when urban development managers working in the field of Politiques de la ville were increasingly vocal about the importance of a ‘cultural component’ in the urban contracts aimed at ‘sensitive urban zones’ in the city. In 2002 (at around the time when New Labour was promoting
‘culture’ as the panacea for economic and social ills in the UK), the former tobacco factory in Marseilles was the site of a conference dedicated to the subject of artistic creation in alternative urban locations. The conference had the support of the secretary of state for Heritage and Cultural Decentralisation and the inter-ministerial director for cities and artists. Cultural associations attended from across Europe to debate the role that artists could play in urban transformation. It was a moment of considerable optimism amongst both cultural workers and urban decision-makers operating in local, national and European circles, regarding the potential transformative role of artists working in impoverished parts of the city. In the same year Marseilles was awarded the ‘Eurocities award’ for innovations in using ‘culture’ as a means to renovate the city. Much of the work that was recognised as part of the Eurocities award took place in impoverished neighbourhoods, and was funded by the multi-level state funded, urban contract.95

The conference marked a juncture when cultural workers had relative power in defining how culturally-inflected urban development should work in impoverished areas. While funding for the arts was reducing, there was a relatively stable funding environment for cultural policy in area-based policy, with many of the small and medium sized arts organisations (almost all led by white managers) having close links policy-makers and funders in this field. For the cultural workers involved in the New Territories of the Arts movement - and I saw this throughout 2010-15 when observing those who were part of this movement, - the ‘independence’ of the artists to produce ‘art’ funded via the state without censorship was fiercely defended. At the same time, reflecting contradictions within their positions, many (like the members of COoL, or the major arts institutions who signed up to the Liverpool Arts and Regeneration Consortium in Liverpool) overtly described their role as an intermediary between the state and the people.96 Often their cultural production was directly linked to how it supported urban development and the French Republican goals of national cohesion (Ingram 2009). In this sense, artists and arts organisations carrying out work in impoverished neighbourhoods were placed in positions of authority with relation to these ‘target audiences.’

95 It is worth noting here that, differently to Liverpool, many civil servants working in urban development in impoverished areas in Marseilles had considerable cultural capital, a number had previously worked popular education or social centres, and some had close affinities with cultural workers operating in the city (see also Tissot 2005).
96 I participated in a number of meetings between 2010-2013, where this posture was overtly stated.
As I develop below, the stability in understandings of the social work of cultural production, and optimism in the potential of ‘the arts’ to transform social relations in impoverished neighbourhoods did not last long. Cultural production was affected by broader shifts in the increasingly competitive, political economy of publically-funded cultural production. The local grant economy was also destabilised by the European Capital of Culture project. It was in this funding environment that Thierry developed his project Défilé des marques. Before I discuss Thierry’s project, I first situate Thierry within the city as a means to engage with a wider discussion concerning the role of cultural works and cultural production in processes of gentrification (see Ley 2003).

**A case study of artists, aestheticisation and gentrification**

During my fieldwork, I regularly walked to Thierry’s simple, ‘artistically-arranged’ flat, (an old sieve serving as a lampshade, political posters on the white walls, bookshelves lined with books on art, architecture, urban sociology and political films from the 1960s, half-read, left-wing newspapers stacked up in a pile), from the quartier of Saint Mauront in the 3rd arrondissement where I was living. In common with other artists with considerable cultural but little economic capital, Thierry lived in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of the city, where he could access lower-priced housing (Susser 2012; Zukin 1995). Most of the workers I observed in the field lived in relative poverty, in shared flats in the so-called ‘creative district’ or ‘bobo’ areas around the 4th and 5th arrondissement, just south of the city centre. Increasing numbers were living in the economically impoverished 1st and 3rd arrondissements, which had started to become more popular with students and cultural workers for a number of intersecting, multi-scalar reasons (see also Part 3).

Belsunce, the quartier where Thierry lived, is situated in the 1st arrondissement of Marseilles, between the main station and the Vieux Port. Over the years the tall, 18th and 19th century townhouses that lined the narrow stone-clad streets have housed new arrivals to the city, as well as serving as a trans-local trading post (Mazzella 1995). In 2010, North African or ‘oriental’ restaurants and fast food outlets were interspersed between retailers of discount household goods, carpets, North African and European fashion clothing shops, tailors, hairdressers, cafés and a mosque. The visible population in the street was predominately male and either North African, or French of North
African origin, often hanging around and chatting in the street, or drinking tea or coffee in local restaurants.\footnote{The area was often referred to as the ‘Arabic district’ (‘le quartier arabe’) by people of all socio-economic backgrounds. This description ignores the increasing presence of West African retailers who have a growing base in the district (Bredeloup 2012), Chinese traders and their families who have become more visible, particularly linked to the wholesale trade in clothes and shoes and increasingly the retail trade, not to mention the ‘cultural workers’.

This area, with its central location and impoverished, immigrant population, has been the target of urban transformation efforts for centuries (Dell’Umbria 2006). From the late 1970s, such schemes were funded by a mix of European, national and local state-led initiatives that aimed to “rehabilitate” the area in ways that were economic, social and ‘aesthetic’ (Massella 1995: 20). The goal was to transform an area often described in pejorative terms as an Arabic *souk* by changing the economic function of the neighbourhood, the type of accommodation, and the social structure of the resident population.

The focus in the 1970s centred on creating a new business centre, linked to a plan to develop a service economy in the city, as the bulk of the city’s port-side industries relocated north around Fos-sur-mer. To achieve this, hundreds of residences and small businesses were expropriated, notably affecting urban dwellers of visible migrant background and North African traders. This formed part of a racialised campaign by political leaders to stop ‘white flight’ and ‘reconquer’ the city centre (see Part 1). Combined factors of a real-estate recession, an overall outward migration of people from the city centre and general inertia by the local authorities prevented the desired transformation from taking place. In the end, the offices imagined as international headquarters of private enterprises were rented by local authorities, and empty commercial properties were bought back by people of Maghreb origin who continue to own, live, rent and trade in the district (Peraldi and Sampson 2005).

Renewed attempts to transform the quartier were launched in the 1990s. An aggressive policy was pursued by a secretive public-private agency, Marseille-Habitat, acting on behalf of the municipality to purchase ‘insalubrious’ property and sell the property on to
new owners. The new buyers generally wanted the vacant lots, which led to some violent processes of forced eviction, particularly of elderly migrants.\textsuperscript{98}

As well as designating the quartier as an area of special heritage interest, the municipality opened a number of cultural institutions, including a municipal music school, a regional library and a museum dedicated to the national anthem, the “La Marseillaise”, which had been open since 2000. Buildings linking a street well-known for being frequented by street workers were transformed into artists’ studios and galleries (Manry 2001). Not far from where Thierry lived, a publicly-funded contemporary arts centre had been opened, next to a local mosque.

The state-led urban transformations were justified in terms of increasing the ‘\textit{mixité sociale}’ (social diversity) of the neighbourhood. Other scholars have pointed to the racial, ethnic and class logic for these policies, where economically poor inhabitants are displaced to make way for middle classes (Kipfer 2016). This was illustrated clearly in an interview with an urban architect working for the AGAM, the state-funded urban planning agency in Marseilles.\textsuperscript{99} He told me that the objective of this programme was to attract “\textit{people like you}”; read: young, middle class and white (see also Manry 2001).\textsuperscript{100}

In 2010, the results of the state-led gentrification policies were clearly visible in the cleaned and revamped facades of the majority of the townhouses and the presence of scaffolding, as renovations were underway. Bollards had been erected to prevent irregular parking and new paving stones were laid down. In the windows of hostels, stickers from the Lonely Planet and Routard endorse the simple pensions, whose clients were previously predominately former North African guest workers or traders, as suitable for tourists. On the evenings when the arts centres organised private viewings, the profile of people in the street would change, as the predominately white \textit{bobo} crowd would spill out into road, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes, dislodging the habitual, mint tea-drinking users from centre stage.

Besides Thierry, I knew personally a number of other white Europeans who rented or owned property in this street or neighbourhood, all of whom had considerable

\textsuperscript{98} Pensons le matin
\textsuperscript{99} MI17
\textsuperscript{100} MI17
educational capital and worked in the arts or cultural sector. Some led very separate lives to the visible immigrants and impoverished residents who were their neighbours, in what Manry (2001) described as somewhat ‘superficial’ cosmopolitanism. Others formed part of the ‘ordinary’ life of the neighbourhood, buying goods from the bazaars, regularly eating lunch in the ‘oriental restaurants’ and contributing to the vitality of neighbourhood activities, including street festivals and communal gardening. Some of the artists and activists living in the neighbourhood challenged the aggressive policies of accumulation through dispossession, described above.

A key organisation here was ‘Un Centre Ville Pour Tous’ (*A City Centre for Everyone*).\(^{101}\) Led by activists with considerable social and cultural capital, some with links to arts and cultural organisations, and many with a background in public urban planning, the organisation was set up in 2000 to help defend older, impoverished and migrant residents against the forced evictions. The association has had some success; while broader processes of gentrification continued, their actions held down the rate of evictions and resulted in the increased provision of social housing in central locations (see Smith 1996 for similar actions in New York).

It is important to note that Un Centre Ville Pour Tous was not the only actor affecting a linear process towards gentrification. Efforts to change the aesthetics of the area have been stalled by private landlords (including the imam of the local mosque) - many involved in transnational networks that extend across the Mediterranean basin and beyond - who refused to cede their property to the municipal agency, or who have been slow to carry out renovations of their properties. Notwithstanding years of intervention, the continued presence and spatial practices of impoverished urban dwellers hampers attempts to represent or transform this urban space into a gentrified neighbourhood or a sanitised tourist destination.

**The racial/ethnic identity of cultural workers**

Despite his recent move to the city, Thierry laid claim to a Marseillaise identity. He often compared his status as a recent arrival with those who had arrived from North Africa, telling me that you became ‘Marseillaise’ on stepping off the ferry from Algeria,

\(^{101}\) As well as an association campaigning for the ‘right to the city,’ the association Centre Ville Pour Tous has amassed a rich source of literature and resources on urban policy in the city centre of Marseilles. www.centrevillepourtous.asso.fr
the TGV or the ‘plane. But he was well aware that such a rhetorically inclusive assertion could ignore the differential possibilities that people have to be included in the material and symbolic processes of city-making.

As seen in the presentations from elite urban policy-makers in Part 1, some people could adopt (or discard) the “vrai Marseillais” category with relative ease in ways that were structured by class, race and gender. Others, most notably people of visible migrant ‘racialised’ backgrounds, would remain ‘migrants’ or foreigners (étrangers) all their lives. Such racialised views of social relations and belonging influenced representations of cultural production in the city.

In the previous section, I described how elite cultural production in Liverpool was seen as having a “mono-cultural edge”. In interviews in Marseilles, I asked who was seen as a cultural producer in the city. Nobody mentioned people of visible migrant background unless pressed. Observations from within offices of the association MP2013 confirmed that there were more than one hundred staff, but other than a couple of elite ‘international’ consultants from North Africa, only one person in the office was of visible migrant background, and she was a junior bookkeeper in the admin team. The Board of Trustees was all white. In an interview with one of the very few theatres led by a non-white director, the African director told me how he was repeatedly refused public subventions for his aesthetic work. The only grants he received were to pay for social interventions in impoverished neighbourhoods where there was a strong presence of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa.

When comparing how different political and ideological models for managing ‘race’ and ethnicity structured opportunities for being included in formal cultural production in Liverpool and Marseilles, this research suggests that the policies monitoring the inclusion of BME artists in the UK and Liverpool did not result in major differences in the profiles of elite cultural producers (Brown 2015). There is one difference between that merits foregrounding however. In the UK, the issue of racial discrimination and a lack of BME representation within cultural production arose periodically as a subject for debate (for the Liverpool case see Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004; Thompson 1996).

\[\text{102 MI27} \]
\[\text{103 MI11} \]
During my fieldwork in Marseilles, I rarely heard any discussion about how ethnic and racial discrimination influenced cultural production, other than calls for an Arabic language theatre by some cultural workers at La Friche, and vocal criticisms by some of the city’s hip-hop artists of international acclaim (France 24 2013).\textsuperscript{104} This begs the question of whether in national contexts such as the UK, where the politics of race is publicly debated, the voices of those who critique racial inequality have a greater chance of being heard than in countries such as France, where the state is supposed to be ‘colour-blind’ (Wade 2015).

**The grant economy of cultural production**

Other than coming up with creative ideas, the most time-consuming and critical activity of the association was applying for funding. Thierry’s financial survival was subject to the successful application for grants, his ability to ‘sell’ or distribute the work he had produced to local authorities and cultural programmers, and sell his labour to other projects. (I recalled similar stresses when I worked for Making Faces United in Liverpool.)

As mentioned above, T.Public was funded by a sheaf of public funders supporting both ‘cultural’ and ‘social’ work, operating at different spatial scales and with different underlying rationalities. While carrying out participant observation, I watched Thierry and Aurélie put together several funding proposals to a number of different funding bodies. As I saw with other ‘artistic’ organisations, there were frictions between the artistic and social objectives of different funders, influenced by hierarchical understandings of cultural value, and the increasingly bureaucratic system for categorising cultural work and workers, cut through with a privileged and class and gendered pattern of cultural production.

**Legal structures governing cultural work**

Applying for grants was structured by a rigid legal framework. The association T.Public was registered under the French framework governing the associative economy as a

\textsuperscript{104} The exception to the rule emerged in interviews with policy officers involved in funding cultural activity through the Urban contract for social cohesion (MI18 and MI19). Here definitions of cultural diversity included food, story-telling and inter-generational transmission of values. I discuss this more below.
cultural association involved in the ‘performing arts’ (*spectacle vivant*) subcategory. In order to be able to organise ‘cultural’ or ‘artistic’ performances and employ professional artists on short-term contracts, Thierry had to apply for a licence to be a live events organiser (*Licence d'entrepreneur de spectacles*). This is a certificate granted by the Regional Board of Cultural Affairs, the ‘DRAC,’ to an individual, rather than to an association, on a three-year basis.

In principle, any person with a university degree, one year’s professional experience in the performing arts or 500 hours of professional training could obtain this certificate. When applying to renew his certificate, however, Thierry spent a day putting together a dossier “*the size of a telephone directory*”, as he described it, which included photographs of his work, press cuttings and articles from professional journals to demonstrate his ‘artistic’ credentials. Between deep drags on numerous cigarettes, and fuelled on coffee, he criticised the complicated bureaucratic systems whereby what sometimes he called ‘the state’ and sometimes ‘technocrats’ could decide who is or is not a ‘professional’ artist. This mattered. If he did not maintain his status as a professional artist, he not only lost social status but his chances of receiving funding from different levels of government’s cultural departments, where work was funded based on the criteria of ‘artistic excellence’.

*Professionalism and precarity*

Thierry’s ability to produce cultural work was also influenced by his status as a ‘professional’. Unlike the UK, and indeed a relatively unique situation across Europe, there is a distinct employment regime in France where social security and taxation conditions support professional artistic production (EC 2006). Along with many other workers in the performing arts, Thierry was registered under the social security system as an ‘intermittent’ worker (*intermittent du spectacle*). This status enabled individuals who had over 500 hours work carried out through short-term contracts to be eligible for unemployment payments for those days when they were not in paid work.

For those who can achieve the 500 hours work, the status provides a certain economic security. However, the status, which has to be renewed each year in a sector that is

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105 This classification served for organisations that sought to produce cultural and artistic performances and related activities (shows, conferences etc.).
becoming increasingly competitive, is underwritten with financial precarity, all the more so given that public bodies have less money to invest in culture and yet there is a growth in people seeking work in this sector (Sinigaglia 2007).

There was a visceral sense among cultural workers that I observed the economic and symbolic conditions for working as a professional in the field of cultural production had declined. As well as reduced resources, shared between a greater number, many noted the increasingly onerous monitoring requirements. I observed many cultural workers busy juggling their work and the ‘system’ in order to maintain their status, to earn enough money to ‘to get by’ and to develop their own artistic projects. For some, this included working informally, “au noir” (‘on the black’ / ‘off-the-books’) as it is commonly referred to in France. There were strong parallels between these practices and the behaviour of the people living in impoverished neighbourhoods in Liverpool and Marseilles, who would try to generate a living wage, while being dependent upon the unemployment benefits system.106

For some, the gradual undermining of the elite status of the cultural worker in France (Serre and Wagner 2015) and a sense of loss of ‘independence,’ as they became increasingly reliant on the conditions and evaluations of technocrats, pushed them to demarcate more clearly the distinction between ‘artistic excellence’ and ‘socio-cultural worker,’ ‘professional artist’ and ‘non-artists.’ I elaborate this point below. Here the point I wish to make is that such efforts to distinguish between professionals and ‘non-artists’. The precarity of the cultural sector contributes towards the tended to reinforce the elite, class-based footing of this sector, including arts administrators, as I describe below.

New forms of cultural work

Given the instability of T.Public’s revenue, T.Public did not employ anybody on a permanent basis.107 Nevertheless, while I was carrying out this research, Thierry employed people on short, fixed-term contracts to help him with fund raising, administration and project organising. The two administrators were young women,
graduates, of middle class backgrounds, white, and recent arrivals to the city (in essence they had similar backgrounds and trajectories to mine in Liverpool). The first, Aurélie, had set herself up as self-employed (*auto-entrepreneur*), a new status created in 2009 under French law. She would help Thierry negotiate his relationship with the state, producing reports, evaluations and funding applications. The second, Mélanie, was a Masters graduate from a prestigious Parisian university. Interested in stage production, she had initially worked for Thierry as a ‘*contrat aidé*’ (state subsidised work), a scheme under which the Central Government paid 85 percent of the minimum wage for certain groups of people, in this case, Masters graduates. Thierry was only able to employ her for one year, because in the subsequent year, state support was reduced to 65 percent. A number of other young women of a similar profile had sent speculative CVs to T.Public including an unpaid intern in another street theatre company and someone who had just finished a Masters in cultural policies and public space. The latter told him that she had sent out over 250 CVs and that Thierry’s was one of the few organisations that had responded.

It was not only small associations that relied on a workforce of contractors and interns. Within the association Marseilles Provence 2013, there were a number of different employment regimes. At the top, were public civil servants, who benefited from generous working conditions and job security; next came people on short-term contracts of various kinds, and finally the interns. I was one of a number of interns who were paid less than €500 per month, which was almost one third of the minimum wage. This made the internship inaccessible to those who did not have free board and lodging.

Such arrangements reinforced the class-based privilege of those able to accept unpaid or low-paid internships in the creative sector (Shade and Jacobson 2015). These observations resonate with the growing casualisation and precarity of labour in the creative and cultural sector, evident in my fieldwork in Liverpool and beyond (Gill and Pratt 2008; Shade and Jacobson 2015). While the number of people working in the ‘cultural sector’ is increasing (in France the number of people working in live arts has increased by 60 percent between 2000-2010, in the UK the employment rate has grown
by over 2 percent each year for the last sixteen years), much of this labour market is increasingly unequal, fractured, and insecure.

Some of the small, publically-funded cultural associations that I observed did have full-time, permanent staff. However, this did not guarantee job security: Staff in these organisations would experience anxious months as they waited to find out whether or not they would be funded. During this time, they could only survive by running up debt to pay fixed costs such as wages and rent. Arguably, having such fixed costs made associations particularly reliant on their public grant givers, limiting their scope for independence.

The two administrators were employed, Thierry explained in an outburst of irritation, because bidding for funding to pay for his cultural activity was “more complicated than reading Shakespeare!” It was not only that the spreadsheets and justifications expected by the funders were extremely detailed, but also that the aims and objectives of grants would change regularly, and each funder had different formats and distinct goals. The increasingly complex administrative framework of culturally-inflected work, together with the growing burden of evaluations, spawned new forms of cultural work. Arts administrators or project developers increasingly mediated between ‘artists’ and their cultural and social activity. In a similar way, Xena would never have accessed public funding for cultural interventions without my administrative skills.

A portrait of an artist as a (middle class) man

Like Thierry, the majority of directors of arts organisations were of middle class background, and graduates from elite public art colleges in Paris. Additionally, the majority of professional artists, artistic directors, and directors of arts and cultural centres that I observed in Marseilles were men, an observation that corroborates findings in a study by Vessillier (1989) concerning the identity of registered professional artists operating in France in the late 1980s. As well as emphasising the educational and social capital of most registered artists, the study found that more than

109 As Thierry noted, in contrast, the majority of ‘participants’ in cultural projects were women. Similar gendered patterning occurred in Liverpool.
75 percent of the artists recorded, and over 80 percent of those who earned a living wage from their artistic work, were male.

The gendered patterning of cultural production was noticeable in many public meetings of cultural actors in Marseilles. Male artistic directors tended to dominate the discussion. The women who participated were often there in the capacity of administrator or project developers rather than ‘artists’. I mentioned this observation to a well-educated, female arts administrator, and it was dismissed as irrelevant. This seems to reflect a ‘postfeminist’ turn, where gender equality has largely disappeared as a legitimate concern in contemporary cultural production (Cohen et al. 2015).

Interestingly, I did not pick up on questions of gender while in the field in Liverpool, reflecting my own ‘postfeminist’ predisposition. With hindsight, I note that only one of the LARC organisations was run by men and most of the outreach workers in the arts and cultural organisations and the regeneration organisations were women, as were the majority of people who participated as cultural actors in the face painting project. This point will be addressed more centrally below.

**From the bid to the stage**

*Differences in representing difference*

Thierry was very critical about what he called the ‘language used’ in funding bids. On one occasion he described the goal of promoting social cohesion as “*government propaganda*”. While the bid writers of the MP2013 bid and city leaders foregrounded the ‘cosmopolitan’ populations and, on occasions, used the presence of ‘ethnic groups’ in place-marketing exercises, there was no overt reference to ethnicity or cultural diversity in the majority of the bid criteria. On one occasion, I showed Thierry the monitoring forms that I used to have to complete for the European Capital of Culture funding that we received in Liverpool; a spreadsheet that requested information on postcode, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability. Thierry reacted with disgust and told me that he refused to collect data on people, comparing this kind of activity to the work of the police.

He was also critical about the “geographic discrimination” in the ways in which the city was divided up into north and south, and location of quartiers affecting the distribution of cultural funding. Theirry’s political opinions sometimes clashed with the
pragmatic views of Aurélie. Aurélie explained to me how rare it was for projects that work across different administrative areas to receive politique de la ville funding, as most money was allocated via the sectoral mayors; Thierry interjected angrily. He expressed his aim was to recruit people from all walks of life, people who work, people who are retired, rich and poor and those from all parts of the city; for Thierry, this was “vraie cohésion sociale” (real social cohesion). Aurélie, part of the new generation of cultural workers, interrupted him in mid-flow to remind him that they were attempting to apply for funding. “You have to be strategic”, she would say, sometimes calmly, sometimes with frustration, as these debates held her up from completing her job. Her attitude took me back to my work in Liverpool, when I too was driven by a sense of needing to ‘play by the rules’ in order to access money, experiencing little compunction in using essentialist terms to evoke areas and groups of people. My rationale was based on a belief that what we were doing was worthwhile; I also needed the money to pay my bills.

**Being strategic**

Not withstanding Thierry’s criticism of ‘governmental propaganda’ and the policing of difference, when applying for bids, Thierry too began talking about having to be strategic. Being strategic involved exploring the social networks he had developed with urban decision-makers in Paris, across the region, department and with locally-elected representatives. Rather than producing cultural work in his own neighbourhood, he contacted urban development officers, local politicians, civil servants and administrators of social centres in areas designated as falling under the jurisdiction of the urban contract for social cohesion to learn where cultural policy funding was being targeted for that year. He would then draw a diagram to map his social networks, starting at the top with the funding body, passing through other arts organisations, down to the socio-cultural groups and social centres (in comparative terms, where Rainbow Faces would be positioned). This would be followed up by a number of phone calls, drawing on social and professional networks, to get advice from elected representatives or local bureaucrats and asking partner organisations if he could use their name in the bid. As emerged in my fieldwork, this fragmented funding environment resulted in differential ways in which culture and social relations were understood and organised around the city.
Differences in measuring difference

Unlike my experience in Liverpool, working with people of particular ethnic or religious was not specifically demanded in most funding applications. The one exception was a grant Thierry accessed from the Paris-based office of the Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities (ACSE). For the latter, cultural work was judged on the numbers of “étrangers” (foreigners) who participated and whether they came from ‘urban sensitive zones’ or not. Nevertheless, identifying people on the basis of racial or religious difference was common practice among cultural workers. In part, this was driven by a growing sense of local funders’ expectations that this money should target people of particular identities. On one occasion in 2014, local managers of the Urban Contract for Social Cohesion fund challenged an arts organisation about the absence of “the Comorians” in their performance, inferring that the project had not reached the desired demographic group.

Administrating the cultural grant economy

In other, longer-established and larger arts organisations I observed, the work of the artistic team was separated from that of the administrative team. This effectively divided the production of artistic work from the laborious task of writing funding bids, developing budgets, producing marketing materials and reporting back to funders. In essence, it separated the artistic team from the politics of the grant economy. This allowed the artistic team to focus on ‘artistic excellence’ and to deny the political and social aspect of their cultural work. In an interview, one asserted:

“We don’t have an aim, other than creating aesthetic and poetic relations with the people, the end result doesn’t matter”.

Yet the administrative team of this organisation regularly bid for government funding set up to instrumentalise cultural work and promote social cohesion. The administrators working in these associations were well aware that their artistic interventions needed to be justified in terms of the concerns of policy-makers for social cohesion. In bid documents they would describe the ‘social and cultural utility’ of the project. In a striking example of the govermentality involved in these projects, in one bid document I

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110 Citation taken from a group interview with three artists and a cultural worker working for a cultural organisation in Saint-Mauront, 2013.
read project outcomes as including teaching projects would teach participants “the rules and codes of life in society.”¹¹¹ I saw associations tie their work to the geographical and administrative areas delimited by public funders or registered social landlords, as I had done in Kensington. In official bids, the objectives of projects were described in terms of “désenclavement” (desegregation). Implicitly, people who were the targets of the policy and the area in which they lived were represented as ‘segregated’ or excluded (see Part 3).

As government discourse on immigration and insecurity were becoming increasingly radicalised (Fassin 2013), two organisations I observed were successful in bidding for the Central Government funding known as ‘Espoir banlieues’. This was introduced under the Presidency of Sarkozy, following the urban riots in 2005, the first objective of this initiative was:

To improve access to culture for those populations the furthest away from the cultural offer and cultural practices for social, economic and territorial reasons¹¹²

It is important to note that both organisations were led by white, middle-class professional artists. The fund was structured on an opposition between ‘artists’ and ‘residents’, it also set out to promote the diversity of cultural expressions, enhance intercultural dialogue, as well as encourage participation in excellent artistic work. I discuss this more in Part 3.

Towards ‘real social cohesion’

As described in the introduction to this section, the citizens’ casting that was the first stage of the Défilé des marques project all took place in the arrondissements to the north of the city, in what are generally known as ‘les quartiers nord,’ areas racialised and criminalised in popular opinion and, like Toxteth, seen as the part of the city associated with visible difference. However, Thierry’s objective of producing ‘vraie cohésion sociale’ meant that he used different means used to promote the call for the ‘citizen’s

¹¹¹ Observed in documents not for public circulation
casting,’ including links with social and cultural associations and mainstream media that reached an audience beyond *les quartiers nord* where the castings were held.

The results of this effort were visible when I participated in the rehearsals for the next performance of the *Défile des marques* in May 2011. Everybody who participated in the September 2010 performance was invited in 2011. Rehearsals were organised during the day and in the evenings to increase accessibility. Ultimately, fourteen ‘citizens’ were able to attend nine days of rehearsals in rooms Thierry rented in a cultural centre in the 3rd arrondissement, the Comptoir. Of those who turned up, there were white French people working in the cultural sector, one with her son, the retired docker mentioned above, along with the Algerian mother and her eight-year old daughter, an unemployed young French woman of Algerian background, a white French woman of Italian background in her sixties, a white French woman who was a teacher in a primary school and a woman of Algerian origin who had previously worked for the French army and wanted to be a model.

*Structuring differences between professionals and non-professionals*

During the preparations for the project and the rehearsals, the differences between professionals and non-professionals - or ‘les citoyens’ - were often implicitly demarcated. I was included in the ‘professionals’ group, as were two other citizen actors of middle class background, who were working in the cultural sector. I had observed such categorical separations in other projects. In many instances, categorical separations were made between artists, ‘non-artists’ or ‘occasional artists.’ Belief in universal notions of ‘artistic excellence’ also worked to reinforce the elite, class-based footing of this sector. Differences between professionals and non-professionals were equally structured by bureaucratic conditions of grant funding. Thierry had wished to pay the non-professionals on the day of the performance. This was not a legitimate outlay for grant funders.

Nevertheless, in between the theatrical warm-up exercises, the choosing of costumes from the bags of props, and rehearsing the parades, Thierry regularly discussed the political meaning of the piece. On occasions he talked about the ways in which the current capitalist society was affecting social relations. He urged the actors on stage to listen to each other with compassion and stressed the need for openness and care for one another. He also drew connections between his own economic precarity and subjection.
to the bureaucratic gaze of the state, with a sense of mutuality with other impoverished people and groups. I recall here the impassioned debates in Thierry’s office as, referring to his copy of the tract of Hessel’s (2011) ‘Indignez-vous!’\(^{113}\) he talked about the struggles that he and other workers had undergone in order to be able to live in the city, where affordable housing was in short supply and access to public services, such as benefits and public crèches were notoriously difficult. Such reflections broke down the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’, in rhetorical terms in any case.

**Challenging dominant cultural frameworks through public cultural performances?**

In many ways Thierry’s work was more political than other projects I followed. The catwalk produced by waste material was meant to evoke unsustainable urban lifestyles, while also referring to the fact that rubbish collection was an emotive subject in Marseilles at the time: Strikes by refuse collectors in 2009 and 2010 had resuscitated narratives of Marseilles as a troublesome, unmanageable city. Thierry was told by one municipal worker that the first fashion collection that we performed, when our heads covered by bags with a burqa-like slit to see through was potentially ‘too sensitive’, in a climate of growing hostility towards Islamic dress in public spaces.

As I accompanied Thierry around the city, helping with the preparations for the performance, he would point out changes in urban governance and ownership. For example, telling me that the recycled waste had been provided by Veolia, the multinational company now responsible for the city’s waste management, as well as for the provision of water in the city; or, informing me that this public building had been sold off at below market rates to be turned into a 5-star international hotel-chain; that public service outsourced to this private company. He described these processes as part of wider patterns of the transfer of wealth from public tax sources to private profit mentioned in the previous chapter. He shared such observations with all performers in the piece. In many ways, his role could be compared to Gramsci’s idea of an ‘organic intellectual’, an elite cultural worker but striving to awaking a degree of (class) consciousness and counter-hegemonic values among participants (Balibar 2012). Some people participated for personal rather than political reasons, such as one woman, of

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\(^{113}\) Written by the former French diplomat, member of the French Resistance and drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the tract concludes by calling for peaceful uprising against financial capitalism. The title was one of the names used to describe Spanish protests against corruption in 2011.
Algerian origin, who wanted to be a model. Others joined for personal reasons and came to value Thierry’s critical analysis. One woman, a white woman of Italian origin, in her late sixties who lived in an impoverished part of the city jokingly exclaimed “He’s like Jesus!” after Thierry had just given me a résumé of his view of the inequalities of cultural funding in the city.

When we turned up in front of the opera for the final dress rehearsal and performance, Thierry stressed to us all that we were performing in one of the most cultural, prestigious venues in Marseille, underlining the point that the project was creating new spatial openings for ‘citizen actors’. On the day of the performance, a crowd of people seemed to appear from nowhere. As with the free outdoor performance I had observed at La Friche, the enactment brought together a cross-section of urban dwellers. Some of the audience were clearly regulars; those who were closely involved in the tightly-enmeshed arts scene in Marseilles; others, such as people I had invited from the 3rd arrondissement, and some friends and family members of performers in the play, had never heard of this monthly performance. Some had never been to this part of the city before.

Twenty minutes after the performance, as the adrenaline and pride was still flowing after my first public performance, I noted that, other than friends and family-members gathered around to congratulate the performers, most of the audience had disappeared. In a material sense, this performance would not change anything significant in the lives of the people who took part in it. Having worked in this sector for 20 years, Thierry was well aware that short-term projects funded through politique de la ville rarely altered materially the quality of life for the people involved. Nevertheless, in an interview, Thierry stressed the important aesthetic and social aspect of such creative practice.

“The citizens who took part in this story, they didn’t end up doing ten minutes of a show, they lived two years of an adventure. This adventure for these people also opened up other…it created new contacts. Like you, you met the people there, you see, it’s life. It’s of huge value, HUGE, huge. It doesn’t stop at such and such an hour. And at a given moment that potential there, that is the work of art”.

Similar points emerged in an informal interview with one of the citizen actors. Acknowledging that this “belle aventure” (beautiful adventure) was fleeting, she went
on to describe the value of being involved in a project with a “cross-section of our society”, “becoming aware of others” and more “open to the world”; something she contrasted with the wider xenophobic currents.

The Défilé des marques had not been planned as a one-off event, however. Thierry had wished to develop this piece, each time working with the same non-professional actors, who were to have increasingly active roles. But his applications to the association MP2013, and other public funders to take the project further were unsuccessful.

Shifts in grant economy of culture: MP2013 and beyond

In common with many cultural workers and urban dwellers working in the city, Thierry had been delighted when Marseilles was chosen to be European Capital of Culture. All the elite artistic organisations with which I had carried out fieldwork had been invited to participate in the consultation in preparation for the MP2013 bid in 2007. Several cultural workers in the city and wider region had developed new project ideas to fit with the broad themes of the MP2013 proposal. Thierry had established the citizens’ casting and Fashion Parade as the first part of a triptych, that he hoped to add to each year in the lead up to 2013.

As well as hoping for new opportunities, many saw this as an occasion to celebrate their city. Similarly to other elite cultural workers with whom I spoke, Thierry was enthusiastic about the Mediterranean narrative and celebrations of cosmopolitanism that accompanied the official story, writing on his website:

“Our beautiful city of Marseilles has won the 13 votes of the jury. We will be European Capital of Culture Marseilles-Provence 2013. T.Public will be offering a range of locally-based democratic, artistic and participative interventions exploring our Euro-Mediterranean culture”.

However, after the bid was won, the MP2013 association seemed increasingly separated from smaller cultural producers. For example smaller artistic associations, including those involved in the New Territories of the Arts that had been working in ‘les quartiers’ for fifteen years, suddenly found their positions increasingly precarious, as they were displaced by ‘international artists’ who were brought in to deliver neighbourhood-based, culturally-inflected development in the context of MP2013. The
most obvious example of this was the ‘Creative quartiers’ project. This was one of the central ‘participative’ projects of this MP2013 programme, part-funded by European Social Funds. It involved short-term artistic residencies situated in a dozen different neighbourhoods targeted by the major demolition and reconstruction work coordinated by ANRU (the National Agency for Urban Renewal). According to the project description, the Creative quartiers interventions were supposed to encourage discussion by local residents concerning urban transformations affecting their quartier. In practice, it rarely worked like this. ‘European’ artists of international reputation were brought in to aestheticise and legitimise urban restructuring that had already been developed (Sevin 2013).

Despite five meetings in the imposing offices of the association MP2013, meeting with various project officers to see if his project would ‘fit’ with the thematic programming of the cultural festival, T.Public became one of 2000 out of the 2600 organisations that had responded to a call for projects by MP2013 and were not successful. Not being included in the formal Capital of Culture programme had a major impact upon an organisation’s cultural production. As the director of another arts organisation put it; “resources diminish across the board if you aren’t in the MP2013 project”. He explained that the Capital of Culture project acted like a vortex, sucking in resources from other public funders, such as the municipality and Departmental and Regional Councils. According to the official evaluation of the Marseilles Provence 2013 project:

“...small, inexperienced and/or amateur operators faced significant barriers to participation in Marseille-Provence 2013. Relatively few of such operators responded to the open call for projects and even fewer were successful.”

(Euréval 2014: 71).

The evaluation makes the direct link between these structural barriers and the lack of “effective involvement of non-traditional, cultural audiences or disadvantaged communities”

**Contextualising the MP2013 grant economy**

The impact of MP2013 should not be considered in isolation. As noted above, many cultural workers found that the conditions for cultural production were deteriorating in general. Public funding for ‘culture’ in impoverished neighbourhoods was increasingly
being used to invest in major cultural institutions, such as La Friche, at the expense of smaller arts organisations. The shifts towards spectacular, crowd-pulling events, the reliance on international experts and the insistence on professionalisation reflect trends seen in Liverpool and in market-driven cultural policy around the world (Dávila 2012). For example, in the case of the Cité des arts de la rue, only the large street theatre companies with an influence at the national and international level were relocated to the new centre. Small companies like Thierry’s were effectively evicted from the former squat and had to find new space to store their property. These investments were linked to broader strategies to reposition the neighbourhood and the city (see Part 3.).

Tensions in cultural values

Some cultural workers I followed described a noticeable shift as the MP2013 project was implemented, from an initial focus on cultural diversity towards a policy of attracting international artists (see Part 1). Yet a different trend was emerging within the funding of cultural work to promote social cohesion. As emerged in interviews and in informal discussions with cultural workers, managers of these projects were increasingly overt about their growing ‘agnosticism’ (to borrow from the conceptual apparatus of Brumann 2014) about the ability for ‘art’ and artists to bring about social and economic transformation. In interviews, managers of the CUCS programme expressed frustration with the ways in which the Capital of Culture project was implemented. The project was criticised for focusing on elite cultural production in the city centre, at the expense of work focusing on social development in impoverished neighbourhoods. Increasingly, cultural workers wishing to access such funding had to prove their value in the terms of the funders’ priorities - ‘social cohesion’ and ‘republican integration’ - rather than ‘artistic excellence’ per se. CUCS projects were no longer accepted on aesthetic value alone. One of the projects I followed had its funding withdrawn, halfway through a project, as the CUCS managers introduced different criteria for analysing their work. Policy officers deliberately talked about supporting multi-cultural, multi-ethnic initiatives, in terms that resonated closely to the work undertaken by the BME team in Kensington Regeneration.

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Similarities and variations

I began this section by asking three broad questions: How did the shifting grant economy of cultural production influence possibilities to be, or be considered to be, a cultural producer? Who were considered the objects of cultural production? And what social work was being produced and how did these processes influence broader processes of urban transformation? Comparing and contrasting the perspectives of the cultural workers involved in these case studies offers a more nuanced understanding of the identities of ‘cultural workers’, and the ways in which such identities are affected by the coming together of different regimes of power in particular places. Despite different national and local frameworks for managing culture, in both cities class, gender and race continue to structure the increasingly precarious modes of cultural production.

There are also broad similarities in the growing casualisation and precarity of labour in the creative and cultural sectors. It is not insignificant that following Liverpool 08 and MP2013, ‘the party is over’ for both Rainbow Faces and the Fashion Parade.

Following these two cases through time enables an exploration of how political economic conditions affected the institutional landscapes for managing and talking about social relations. The two cases drew out how shifting multi-scalar relations affect the construction of urban places. The face painting project in Kensington showed how cultural production was transformed, as the area was reconfigured to become an entry point to the city centre, undergoing ‘urban renaissance’ during the run-up to the European Capital of Culture bid but also a site requiring regeneration. Similar processes were happening in Marseilles in the Belsunce area. Links between city centre gentrification and arts production and multi-scalar processes of urban repositioning emerged clearly. I develop this in Part 3.

Complementing and nuancing Part 1, the impact that differences in the French and UK systems was explored, while highlighting convergences and variations that emerged at within different urban spaces. In Marseilles, urban development managers in impoverished neighbourhoods started to fund projects promoting multiculturalism, even if they are not labelled as such. In the Liverpool case, it was possible to see how national policies of managed multiculturalism were moved towards an approach of assimilation and community cohesion in the context of anti-terrorism policies.
In the two cities, cultural workers contributed to the racialisation and othering of urban dwellers in impoverished parts of the city in order to access the grant economy, though the way this worked differed because of distinctions in the French and UK ideology of (multi)cultural work. At the same time, these studies nuance the idea that cultural workers necessarily reproduce hegemonic narratives and practices. Cultural workers studied did justify their work in the terms of policy-makers to win funding, but Thierry, Xena - and I too - reacted against the “social engineering” or “government propaganda” attached to the culturally-inflected grant economy. In both projects, social relations with the so-called ‘objects’ of cultural work developed because of personal capacities for sociability, shared precarious economic positions and political worldviews. While Thierry was not funded to develop the next two acts in the triptych, and this was somewhat marginalised within cultural production, in a small way the performance had challenged some of the self-evidence of who was or was not a cultural actor in the city. Equally, the face painting project transcended the (multi-)cultural instrumentalism to enable people in impoverished neighbourhoods in Liverpool to be an actor within official cultural performances.

While operating from positions of privilege, certain cultural workers in both cities were involved in reflective practices, taking part in critical debates about the links between culturally-inflected urban development and broader processes of domination, dispossession and devaluation. Some cultural workers, such as Burlaud, are exploring new models to create models which might avoid the constraints of either French republicanism or neoliberal urban repositioning. His film continues to be shown in different venues in Marseilles, as on-the-margins cultural workers and other urban actors explore alternative forms of urban transformation. It is important to note and theorise such events, as this can lead to the organisation of activities that can challenge top-down urban development, as well as resulting in informal urban practices that appropriate urban space. Thierry once defended his own cultural production by citing Hessel (2011): “To create, is to resist, and to resist is to create”. Although, as Burlaud signalled and as this Part of the thesis illustrates, these gestures of resistance need to be understood as inflected with - and sometimes reproducing - unequal relations of power.

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Part 3: Urban culture/s and everyday lives

“Culture is ordinary: that is where we must start” (Williams 2014[1958]: 92)

In this third section I describe, analyse and compare the ways in which individuals and groups living in areas targeted by culturally-inflected urban development saw, talked about and experienced socio-spatial relations and ‘culture’ in relation to the institutional perspectives set out above. I investigate how ‘ordinary people’ struggle to create meaningful places and spaces in these cities undergoing transformation. In Marseilles, I use my experience participating in a neighbourhood choir led by an arts organisation in the quartier of Saint-Mauront, in the 3rd arrondissement of Marseilles. In Liverpool, I draw on my involvement in the face painting project described in Part 2, as well as on my research among women who moved to the UK to seek asylum, and who were living in and around the inner-city area of Kensington. To explore these questions, I deploy social network analysis.

Situating social networks

Social network analysis is once again becoming popular in the social sciences, although there are many differences in the ways in which it is deployed across and between disciplines (Knox et al. 2005). I build here on the approaches to social networks that have emerged in urban anthropology since the 1950s (see Bott 1957 [2014]; Hannerz 1980; Mitchell 1969; Wimmer 2004). In such work, thinking with and through networks serves as an analytical device rather than a methodical strategy (Knox et al. 2005). Rather than trying to objectify and quantify networks, field data is analysed to draw out socio-spatial social ties.

One problem identified with network analysis is that social ties can be ‘flattened’ and abstracted from everyday life. By doing so, the multi-scalar dimension of social relations is lost, and the significance of centres and peripheries and relations of unequal power are elided (Green et al. 2005). To prevent this, I situate my observations in time and place, noting when and where interrelations took place, and how these related to
broader institutions and fields and structural factors such as understandings of class, race, ethnicity, time, gender; all expressions of unequal power.\textsuperscript{115}

By placing my analyses of social networks within broader discussions of multi-scalar urban transformation, this section contributes to understandings about 1) how, where and when people come into contact with different ideas (of culture, space, difference), values and behaviours; 2), the multiple, sometimes contradictory, ways in which space, identity, community and culture are represented and lived; 3) the significance of structure and agency, and the role of both weak, fleeting social and cultural ties and close-knit relations in processes of cohesion and change.

Thus, this part of the study both shows how people and places imagined as marginal from processes central to cultural and economic life are central to discussions surrounding culturally-inflected urban development and contributes towards understandings of how ordinary urban dwellers’ possibilities for involvement in the city were affected, as policy-makers in Liverpool and Marseilles used the European Capital of Culture project as a means to reposition the city in various hierarchically-interconnected political, economic, social and cultural.

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**Marseilles: not always singing to the same tune**

In mid-November 2010, I attended my first choir session with the neighbourhood choir - the ‘chorale du quartier’ - coordinated by an artistic association that was part of the artistic movement, New Territories for Art, Art de Vivre. Between that November and the following June, (in parallel with the fieldwork I carried out with T.Public, described in Part 2), I attended the two-hour session most Thursday afternoons. During this time, I lived with one of the choir participants, Sylvie, a white, French seventy year-old woman of Italian origin who was born in Tunisia, and who now lived alone on a social housing

\textsuperscript{115} Gender proved to be a significant factor in shaping the formal interventions that I explored in Marseilles and Liverpool, and I address this specifically as I discuss my findings.
estate in Saint-Mauront. I participated in both formal and informal cultural and social activities with different choir members and neighbours, which took place in the local neighbourhood, and extended beyond the city.

At my first session with the choir, I stood in the circle, in the middle of a social centre, with the other choir members, the choirmaster and three members of Art de Vivre. My first observations of the group were that all but one of the choir ‘participants’ were women; all were white European and most were aged over 60. As I listened to the informal, familiar banter, and saw what I considered to be a socio-cultural homogeneity between members, I assumed a certain cohesiveness to the choir. I anticipated there would be a shared understanding of what culture was and what was valuable about the project. In fact, there were considerable variations in perceptions of the value and work of the choir, not least between key members of the choir and the artistic organisation that ran it. These factors contributed to the demise of the cultural project in 2012, one year before Marseilles was European Capital of Culture.

To present the social relations of the choir, and situate it within the neighbourhood and city, I organise this analysis around my initiation into the choir on that first Thursday in November, when I walked to the social centre where the cultural activity took place.

**Situating the choir within the city**

I learned about the choir from Camille, a white French female arts administrator. She worked for another arts association that received cultural and politique de la ville funding to carry out artistic interventions in impoverished parts of the city. Her organisation was based in a former match factory and spice warehouse built in the 19th century, known as the Comptoir de Victorine-Toussaints (the Comptoir), where I had participated in the rehearsals for the Défilé des marques described in Part 2. The building was located in a densely residential area in the quartier of Saint-Mauront, five minutes walk from Sylvie’s flat.

Saint-Mauront borders the quartier of the La Belle de Mai in the 3rd arrondissement. But the Belle de mai is situated closer to the central station, the touristic centre, and was included in the Euromed development area from 1995. La Belle de Mai was identified as a site for investment in cultural infrastructure; Saint-Mauront was somewhat in the shadows, and seen as neglected by some local policy-makers and people living in the
area. There were arts organisations in Saint-Mauront, located in various former industrial buildings, as was the case with the Comptoir. There are resonances between the, transformation of the Comptoir and La Friche. It offers a useful weathervane pointing to the uneven and evolving processes of culturally-inflected development in the city.

*The Comptoir*

In the early 2000s, the site of the Comptoir was privately-owned and divided into different units that were rented out to various artistic, cultural and economic enterprises. In 2006, at a time of a rise in interest in housing in Marseilles, the landlord had negotiated to sell the site to an international property developer. This would have led to the displacement of existing social, economic and cultural activity on the site. Cultural associations based within the building organised a campaign to request that the building be purchased by public authorities. Slogans were used that stressed the value of artistic and socio-cultural activities, such as:

“No to the expulsion of artisans and artists! Yes for social and cultural activities for all”.

Their campaign coincided with the initiation of the city’s bid to become European Capital of Culture, As a result of the high-profile campaign, drawing on the social and cultural networks of the cultural workers, the municipality agreed to purchase the Comptoir, a decision announced by the city mayor in December 2006 at a public meeting to launch the Marseilles-Provence 2013 bid. This marked a moment of relative social, political and cultural influence of elite cultural workers in the neighbourhood. A number of cultural institutions continue to be based there, but the building is something of a poor relation compared to La Friche. Basic repairs have not been carried out by the municipal owners affecting the use of the building and questions about the building’s future re-emerged regularly.

‘Local artistic creation’

Knowing that I wanted to participate in a cultural initiative based project involving ‘ordinary’ people in the area, Camille introduced me to the directors of the Art de Vivre, also based in the Comptoir. Art de Vivre was linked to the New Territories for the Arts movements developed in the 1990s and early 2000s, along with a number of other
cultural workers working out of the Comptoir and La Friche. Over the years, they had been successful in accessing funding through the multi-level politiques de la ville grants, as well as from local, national and European bodies for cultural and social activity. In practical terms, this meant delivering cultural work in ‘sensitive urban zones’. According to their promotional literature, their work of Art de Vivre in the Comptoir was defined as “création artistique de proximité” (local artistic creation) and they promoted the development of art projects outside traditional artistic institutions, “avec les habitants” (with residents). The chorale du quartier, or neighbourhood choir, was one of a number of different aesthetic projects developed by Art de Vivre, in the quartiers of Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de Mai.

One particularity of the choir was that it was funded by money raised through applying for a Central Government grant, known as ‘Espoir Banlieues’ (Hope in the Banlieues). As mentioned in Part 2, this was set up to support cultural activities that would promote “Republican integration” in “sensitive urban zones”, in the wake of urban riots in France in 2005. The objectives of this fund included; facilitating “access to culture for socially, economically and geographically marginalised”, “strengthening and sustaining excellent and diverse cultural and artistic provision” and “promoting diversity of cultural expression and intercultural dialogue”. Work based in Saint-Mauront was eligible for this grant, as it was identified as a ‘sensitive urban zone’ and according to official statistics, these are some of the most disadvantaged quartiers in the country (DROS-PACA 2013), with some of the highest percentages of what, in the latest urban policy jargon are called are called ‘primo arrivants’ (new arrivals). Reflecting the racialising frames through which urban populations are viewed, the ‘new arrivals’ being referred to were not the young cultural workers or PhD students who had moved into the area from across France or Europe, but migrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa (especially the Comorian Islands and more recently Cape Verde).

Significantly, all of the organisations that were awarded this funding in Marseilles were elite artistic associations, well-established within the grant economy of culturally-inflected urban development.

As I described in Part 2, the language of the grants reflected dominant understandings that assumes that ‘culture’ is not inherent to people living in impoverished areas. Social marginalisation is assumed based on lack of participation in elite aesthetic practices.
Furthermore, social relations were structured around the need to negotiate cultural difference, reinforcing narratives that link the presence of diversity with a threat to social cohesion (Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2015; Wimmer 2004).

Part of the story here is about the ways in which the development of the choir reinforced certain boundaries of social and cultural difference at the interstices of elite understandings and practices of cultural values, social relations and everyday situated socio-spatial practices. Additionally, drawing on observations noted over a number of years, I also show that these social boundaries were not rigid, and morphed over time as new connections were made and changes occurred in the wider political economy, in turn shifting relations of power in the neighbourhood.

**Locating the choir in the neighbourhood**

The directors of Art de Vivre agreed - with no consultation with participants - that I could attend the choir. I was not given any details about where the choir met. (I would quickly learn that this was typical of the interactions between the artistic directors of the association and the everyday running of the choir). Turning up at the Comptoir on the following Thursday, I was fortunate to encounter Thibault, a white Frenchman in his early 30s, informally dressed in jeans and t-shirt, a guitar strung on his back, whom I correctly assumed was involved in the choir.

Thibault had been recruited as a part-time, ‘intermittent’ cultural worker tasked to run the choir. Influenced by my instrumentalist approach to seeing cultural activity, picked up when working at Kensington Regeneration, I asked Thibault on different occasions how he saw the choir, and its purpose. I wanted to know what it was supposed to do. He described – and ethnicised - the choir members with some affection, as lively “mamies Italiennes” (Italian grannies). For him, there was no focus on deliberately recruiting people from different backgrounds; the main purpose was the pleasure that could be generated by bringing people together to sing. Not involved in the administration of the Art de Vivre, he seemed unaware of the political and social objectives set out in funding applications. He had only worked for the association since September 2010, four years after the choir had been established. He replaced other cultural workers who had
withdrawn from the project because of differences in understandings about how Art de Vivre operated.\textsuperscript{116}

On that first day I learnt from Thibault that the choir was to meet at ‘La Fratérnité’, a social centre run by a Protestant-based organisation, located in the neighbouring administrative quartier of the La Belle de Mai. I experienced over time that such short-notice decisions to change the location of the choir were not uncommon. These decisions were taken by the arts organisations, in relation to the strategic purposes of the people running the project. For, as well as encouraging “cultural practices for groups marginalised for social, economic and geographic reasons”, and “promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue”, one objective of this Central Government-funded grant was to promote partnership working between social and cultural workers in poor neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{117} I discuss this below.

**Social, economic and cultural relations in a shifting urban landscape**

**Housing and public space**

Thibault and I headed down the steep street on which the Comptoir was situated, which was lined with battered cars. Low cement-clad workers’ terraces faced the former warehouse; part of a dense mesh of housing that had originally been built for the mainly Italian migrant workforce, in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. These former workers’ houses have now been identified on urban planners’ maps as part of the ‘village’ of Saint-Mauront, described as being of ‘cultural heritage interest’, and an ‘asset’ in efforts to rescale Saint-Mauront as part of Marseilles’ urban repositioning strategies (Valageas et al. 2013). As I learned through informal conversations with choir members, current inhabitants included a mix of old-established residents with links to the Italian wave of migration, along with more recent migrants from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe and, more recently, some ‘Parisians’.

Our route led to the central shopping area of the La Belle de Mai. As we walked in this direction, we passed 19\textsuperscript{th} century townhouses. These were similar to the housing in Belsunce described above. Given their polluted exteriors, they had clearly not been

\textsuperscript{116} Personal communication November 2015
\textsuperscript{117} www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Politiques-ministerielles/Developpement-culturel/Politique-de-la-ville/Chronologie. Last accessed 25/10/2015
targeted by urban renewal policies. These houses were predominately privately-owned, rented accommodation. Not far from the Comptoir, one lone HLM tower block stood incongruously above the mainly low-lying urban landscape. Other than this, and one other cluster of tower blocks to the north of Saint-Mauront, most of the city’s high-rise, social housing had been built on cheaper land further north of the city (see Part 1).

Some of the housing in the area had been judged ‘insalubrious’ and was subject to urban clearance or repossession orders, part of broader processes of urban development.

Dotted between older buildings were blocks of private apartments built during the 1980s. Most of these included security features such as underground parking, high railings, electric gates and intercom systems to keep ‘the quartier out’, in a neighbourhood increasingly associated with crime and ‘incivility.’

Housing was an important factor in structuring local social relations. Much of the work carried out by the welfare rights organisation I observed was to provide a service for people attempting to access decent housing in the neighbourhood. I learnt from those members of the choir who were workers or volunteers in the welfare rights office that two thirds of the population of Saint-Mauront were eligible for social housing, but that there was a lack of suitable provision in the quartier. Reflecting historic patterns of ownership and state investment, less than 20 percent of the housing stock was ‘social’.

The high proportion of private, unregistered rental accommodation was one reason that there were so many newly arrived, impoverished migrants, who, facing considerable barriers in accessing social housing often had little choice but sometimes substandard, relatively expensive - private accommodation was often all that was available to them.

Conversely, as has always been the case in this part of the city, other new arrivals moved to the area because of already-established social networks, sometimes structured around national, ethnic and religious ties (Dell’Umbria 2006).

As one of the choir members/welfare rights workers told me, many of the families in the neighbourhood were larger than average for Marseilles. Conversely, apartments in the area were generally smaller than elsewhere in the city (AGAM and GIP/PdIV 2009).

This was one reason that people, particularly young people, socialised in the street. Another reason was that there was little alternative open space where people could congregate in this dense urban neighbourhood. Patterns of congregation of (young) people of visible migrant background in public spaces was one factor that contributed to
racialised understandings of the neighbourhood, the criminalisation of young people, and the sense of insecurity among many urban dwellers (Wacquant 2008).

Historically-situating economic and cultural production

The industrial past of the quartiers of Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de Mai continues to structure economic activity. Former industrial buildings have been converted into small garages and metal-bashing workshops by male entrepreneurs of diverse ethno-national backgrounds. Because of the proximity to the docks, some served as depots or warehouses for the storage of goods, to be distributed regionally or transnationally. Other buildings, such as the Comptoir, had been converted into workshops, gallery spaces and offices for cultural workers who set up a base in the area, taking advantage of the relatively cheap rents and growing cultural, social and institutional web of relations in this neighbourhood, of which associations in the Comptoir, and La Friche were a part.

It was not only the cheap rents that shaped arts productions. On our walk, Thibault told me that the presence of so many cultural institutions and the intensity of cultural activity in the 3rd arrondissement was in stark contrast to the impoverished 15th arrondissement where he lived, five kilometres to the north of Saint-Mauront. But this had not always been the case. As Christine, another member of the choir, told me in the context of an interview discussing the opening of a new, publically-funded dance centre:

“…at the moment, the whole world is turning towards Saint–Mauront, Saint-Mauront/La Belle de Mai...you see...they're all coming here”

The proliferation of ‘cultural’ activity to which she was referring attention was a direct result of additional public money that had been drawn to this area because of government statistics that identified Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de Mai as two of the poorest quartiers in Marseilles. Both had been designated as ‘sensitive urban zones’. The growth in cultural activity was also affected by the changed relative location of these two quartiers.

As mentioned above, from 1995 the area around La Friche had been incorporated into the Euromed development zone. Saint-Mauront’s relative position shifted as the Euromed project was extended north in 2007 and in light of new plans to expand the ‘city centre’, associated with preparations for the European Capital of Culture. Saint-
Mauront began to included in efforts to reposition Marseilles as a metropolitan centre. There are clear resonances with the shifting relative location of Kensington, when it became re-imagined as a gateway to the city-centre area. However, unlike that particular part of Liverpool, here, the support for the cultural sector had been identified as a potential factor for increasing growth, attractivity and ‘social mixity’ by urban development agencies working in impoverished areas and as well as local political leaders (AGAM, GIP Politiques de la Ville de Marseille 2009). Resonating with patterns emerging across the world, the implantation of new cultural structures had been accompanied by increasing numbers of students and cultural workers in the area (Smith 1996, Lees et al. 2007; Ley 2003).

*Diverse understandings and experiences of the quartier*

Our route took us across a small, wedge-shaped public square. I was unaware of this at the time but when we had reached this square, we were no longer in Saint-Mauront. For many people not familiar with the area, including some elite cultural workers, the spatial identity of Saint-Mauront was often subsumed under the more well-known identifier of the La Belle de Mai. It was a practice that echoed my usage of ‘Kensington’ to refer to the Kensington Regeneration area in Liverpool, when that particular area-based initiative cut through a number of different wards.

While innocent in intention, the use of the more prominent ‘La Belle de Mai’ to describe everything that happened in the 3rd arrondissement reflected the rising profile of the quartier in cultural circles, linked to the presence of La Friche, and an indicator of nascent processes of gentrification in the neighbourhood. It also reveals a lack of understanding of lived social geographies of some urban dwellers. For certain choir members (at certain times), where Saint-Mauront stopped and the La Belle de Mai began mattered, as these differences related to historically-embedded neighbourhood allegiances and situated structures of feeling. This was the case for Christine.

"We’re from Saint Mauront"

Christine was a white French woman born to first generation Italian immigrants aged in her mid 70s. Her family had been one of the first to be moved into the newly-built social housing (where I would live with Sylvie), no doubt influenced by her father’s position in working for the municipality; as housing was generally allocated to the ‘respectable’ working class (see Mattina 2007). Christine, like other members of her generation,
would often talk with nostalgia about the neighbourhood during this time, when the social relations were a dense localised web and the ‘villages’ of Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de Mai more distinct. Two of the songs that we sang were written in the 1940s and had been written in homage to each quartier.

In February 2011, a social event was organised by the choir members, one of a number of occasions when members would manifest pride in ‘local culture’ and introduce me to the ‘real’ Marseilles, as I describe below. On this occasion, different members of the choir had offered to cook a “traditional Marseillaise recipe”. The meal was held at the Comptoir before a choir session, and workers from the arts associations based in the building had been invited to sample the food. Making conversation, one worker looked around the table and asked if everybody in the choir came from the La Belle de Mai. On that particular occasion, Christine threw a glance at the choir members (including me in her gaze), and corrected her quickly; “We’re from Saint-Mauront” she said.

Yet for Christine and other members who, what and where ‘Saint-Mauront’ was, was less clear-cut. In an interview, Christine distinguished between the older 19th century district, or what might be called ‘upper Saint-Mauront’, situated on top of the hill near the Comptoir. This included the workers cottages around the Comptoir and the 1930s social housing estate where choir members lived. She then went on to describe the “lower Saint-Mauront” which was associated with what Christine once called the new “physiognomy” of the neighbourhood; the new immigrants whose presence in Saint-Mauront “dépaupérisé” (impoverished) the neighbourhood. This lower part of Saint-Mauront had become synonymous with some of the few part-publicly owned, part-privately owned high-rise tower blocks built in the 1960s, that had gained a national notoriety having been linked with criminality, drugs and the racialised identities of “les Arabes et les Commoriens”. Different institutions and funding streams operated in the two parts of the quartier, sometimes provoking resentment and envy. Social divisions and connections between these two parts of the city were actually much more mixed than this, but such racialised ‘structures of feelings’ influenced participation in the choir and the organisation of certain cultural activities; though not all social networks that I observed.

Public squares and neighbourhood facilities
This square offers a good vantage point from where to think through some of the intersections and disconnects between institutions and everyday structures of feeling shaping life in the neighbourhood, and the various networks of people involved in the choir. On one side of the square was a hairdresser’s salon, a bar with chairs set out on the public square, a small convenience store and a large, 20th century, concrete clad Catholic church. The other sides were delimited by public roads lined with low-lying buildings, with street-level units occupied by small traders including what Thibault described as the “Armenian” baker’s, a tobacconist and a newsagent, a chemist, a couple of bars and more convenience stores and fast-food outlets. Opposite, next to a mid-level block of private flats, was a public theatre that, in 2014, would be transformed into the cinema in which I watched the film discussed at the start of Part 2. That day, as was often the case, a group of Comorian men, identifiable by the cream-yellow caps that some of them wore, were hanging out informally on one side of the square, keeping themselves to themselves. A couple of older white men were sitting on the benches in the autumn sun. A few people, of varying ages but predominately of Sub-Saharan or North African origin, were waiting for the overcrowded buses to take them into the city centre or to the north of the city. On the bar terrace, people of both white European and North African backgrounds were sitting drinking coffee or reading the local newspaper.

I began to frequent the bar because of my relationship with Josephine, one of the members of the choir. She regularly cut through the square when walking her small dog, or when heading to the market or supermarket in a larger square that represented the commercial centre of the neighbourhood. At the turn of the 20th century, that larger square had been the site of the renowned public dances (les bals populaires), when the La Belle de Mai was racialised as the district where the ‘mange spaghettis’ (spaghetti eaters) lived - and fabled for its lively working class social life and radical left-wing politics.

Josephine was a white Frenchwoman in her late 50s (although she would probably define herself as ‘Marseillaise’). One of seven children, she was born to a Spanish father, a political refugee from the Franco regime who had worked on the docks of

118 A number of commentators have written about an important sense of urban citizenship in Marseilles, rather than allegiance to a French or European social space, though of course, this is relational and changes over time and space (see Césari, et al. 2001 and Mitchell 2011).
Marseilles, and a Danish mother. Like most of the people in the choir, she had worked from an early age in various factories and low-paid service industries, before becoming a fulltime carer for her husband and daughter. She spent her early life in the north of the city, but most of her adult life in the 2nd and 3rd arrondissement. When I met her, she was living in a privately-rented apartment not far from the Comptoir. She had moved to Saint-Mauront because the landlord of her previous apartment, which was situated in the Euromed redevelopment zone, had sold her home from under her feet. This is one example of the ways in which people often seen ‘as fixed in place’, are displaced through current processes of urban transformation (Smith 1996; Glick Schiller 2014). She could afford this private accommodation because of her husband’s pensions and social security payments.

Josephine did not consider herself to be ‘from’ Saint-Mauront. Both she and other members of the choir, described the neighbourhood in disparaging terms. “C’est pourri” (literally; “it’s rotten”), was common. Often in informal discussions between some of the choir members, dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood was racialised; at least two of the choir members voted for the right-wing party, the Front National, a party that regularly polled 25 percent of the vote in Marseilles. Nonetheless, as I observed while drinking a coffee or an apéro at the bar terrace, Josephine interacted with urban residents of all backgrounds; the bar owner who was of North African origin, the white French waitress with whom she attended nightclubs on the outskirts of Marseilles, her neighbours who were of a variety of ethno-national backgrounds, particularly those who had young children (whom she adored) and sometimes with some of the cultural workers who drank their coffee there.

Some of these interactions were casual and fleeting, and dismissed as not meaningful by Josephine; some developed into friendships and provided important sources of solidarity and support, but they offer a good example of what Jensen (2015) calls everyday, lived social cohesion. Many of these interactions seemed more open than those I saw within the confines of the choir.

**Age and gender**

Josephine’s personal capacity for conviviality and forging social relations structured such interventions in this particular public space. However, participation in such public spaces were influenced by dominant social conventions about gender roles. The
majority of the clients of the bar were men. Other women who frequented the bar tended to be around Josephine’s age - in their late 50s - or younger. They included both long-term residents, of white European and North African origin, as well as some white European cultural workers. Josephine was well aware that for some members of the choir, this was not an ‘appropriate’ social space in which to socialise. When I had suggested to Sylvie that she join me for a coffee at the café she refused. For Sylvie and some of the other female members of the choir of a similar age and upbringing, people who might be categorised as ‘respectable working class’; the idea of attending public bars was not socially or culturally suitable (see Skeggs 2011). This suggests one reason why women found the closed social spaces of cultural projects such as the choir to be so important.

Sylvie was born in Tunisia to Italian parents in the early 1940s. Following the war, she followed her father and thousands of other impoverished and ‘naturalised French’, and moved from North Africa to look for work in metropolitan France. Like many impoverished migrants, they initially lodged in Belsunce. When her father found manual work in the shipbuilding industry in La Joliette, Sylvie was brought up under the watchful eyes of a tightly-knit network of Italians, subjected to strict cultural and social rules governing women’s interactions in public. When she was 17 she married another Italian migrant and moved to the social housing estate in Saint-Mauront, along with other members of her husband’s family and other Italian families, such as Christine, the very ‘networked’ member of the choir mentioned above. Sylvie’s behaviour continued to be policed by her husband and his family.

After bringing up two daughters, she broke social and religious conventions and divorced her husband. To escape surveillance from these social networks, Sylvie developed strategies to maintain social distance and safeguard her personal space, becoming intensely private and mistrustful. The informal, relatively open relations of the café culture did not fit either with Sylvie’s particular social disposition, or her upbringing. As social intimacy developed between Sylvie and me in the privacy of her flat, Sylvie regularly described urban social relations in overtly racialised and

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119 Josephine was aware of these social conventions and knew that she risked social condemnation if she drank too much or was not “respectable”. She often told me she wished she had been born later, so she could be freed from such censure. When she had a new partner, he dissuaded her from socialising in such public places.
xenophobic terms and associated what she considered to be the ‘deterioration’ of the neighbourhood with the increased presence of racialised migrants. Her views of who was a “true Marseillais” echoed almost verbatim those of the Mayor of Marseilles, cited in Part 1. Though such exclusionary racialised views of who belongs in the city, is not a local particularity, being observable across France (Balibar 2012).

While Sylvie did not make the connection at first, in many ways her behaviour was similar to that of Samia, who lived below Sylvie in her block of social housing. Samia was Algerian and lived with her children, who had French citizenship, and sometimes with her husband. Both women spent much of their time indoors, with the television for company (in Sylvie’s case, mainly the right-wing privately-owned station TF1), and rejected the casual sociability of street parties and cafés. Both socialised in closed cultural and social groups, though for Sylvie these included the choir and another association that provided cultural and social activities and company for impoverished elderly people. Both Sylvie and Samia’s movements around the city were constrained by socio-cultural conventions about how and where women should be seen, as well as economic impoverishment and their concerns about urban violence.

Over nine months, I observed a relationship of neighbourly trust beginning to develop between Sylvie and Samia, mediated by gifts of food sent up by Samia’s daughters and also by my presence. At first Sylvie was mistrustful of the intentions behind these gifts; over time the conversations on the doorsteps became longer, and sometimes reached beyond the front door to the kitchen table. Notwithstanding that the overt racism of Sylvie’s language continued, certain points in common emerged as the two women discussed views and experiences of jealous husbands and “bad neighbours”. When I thanked Samia for the latest dish she had sent up, she told me it was “in her culture” to look after elderly neighbours. Significantly, neither Sylvie’s relationship with Samia nor Josephine’s relationships with her neighbours were ever mentioned in the social space of the choir, something I analyse below.

120 It is important to note that Sylvie’s views shocked her own children. When talking to me, they explained her understandings in terms of “her generation”.

190
Social ties of local traders

The convenience store next to the café, with fruit and vegetables set out on stands in the public square, sold a mix of dry and fresh goods, alcohol and cheap white baguettes; it was typical of a number of small stores found in impoverished neighbourhoods throughout the city. This store was run by a family of Tunisian origin whose social relations extended from the local square, the local school, where their children were pupils and to kin in Tunisia, contacts facilitated via social media and the web of flights between the local airport and North Africa. As with the businesses described in Part 2 in Belsunce, this family business formed part of the local and transnational political, economic, cultural and social links that extended across the city to North Africa.

In everyday conversation, the owners of the shop were regularly racialised as “les Arabes”, both by cultural workers and by participants of the choir. For some choir members, including Sylvie, Christine and Josephine, the presence of such stores and other visible ethno-demographic transformations of the area were often given as evidence that the neighbourhood or the city “was deteriorating” (se dégrade). The visible and racialised presence of non-white bodies in the quartier contributed to its territorial stigmatisation and relative positioning (Wacquant 2008). Josephine told me how family members made disparaging comments about the fact that she lived in a neighbourhood with many “Arabes”. When I spoke to urban planners about these businesses, they were not considered as part of the ‘shopping offer’ of the imagined metropolitan economy. There were not they considered to be part of the ‘Euro-Mediterranean’ economy (see also Tarrius 1992). At the same time, shops such as these offered important local social and economic services, including providing credit for Josephine when she was in financial difficulties, as she acknowledged in an interview with me.

Religious institutions

While none of the choir members attended the Catholic church of the La Belle de Mai, religious institutions and charitable associations played an important role in mediating social relations in this impoverished part of the city. As well as officiating religious rites, on two occasions between 2012 and 2014, the priest of this church La Belle de Maihad opened its doors to Roma families, who had been expelled by state authorities from an informal shelter that they had been living in, on the edge of Saint-Mauront. He
did this in the context of swelling local and national xenophobic rhetoric towards Eastern European migrants, and inertia from the local authorities. He was not alone in offering support. I met other urban dwellers, including teachers, parents and cultural workers who campaigned against racism towards Roma and offered material support of shelter, clothes and food manifesting what could be called ‘diasporic cosmopolitanism’ (Glick Schiller 2015). But it is against such acts as these that the claims of (certain) urban leaders (at certain times) that “Marseilles always welcomes” need to be critically examined (see Part 1).

Through my participation in the choir, I came to learn about the ‘L’Œuvre’, an enclosed complex behind cement-clad walls, situated five minutes away from the Comptoir. This institution had been opened by a Catholic priest in 1904, at a time when towns and cities were expanding rapaciously, with no concern for planning guidelines (Mumford 1940, particularly 143-222). Factories and warehouses took precedence in the area, with other urban facilities such as residential properties filling in the gaps. No thought was given to the quality of life of workers and their families; the L’Œuvre had been created by the Catholic Church to provide a place where young children (of the mainly Italian or Corsican workers) could play. In 2010, Italian and Corsican migrants had generally been included in representations of ‘Marseille de souche’ (‘born and bred’ or ‘ordinary Marseillaise) but the work of the L’Œuvre continued, as I saw when Christine had arranged for us to sing some songs at a Christmas party for children and their families in their neighbourhoods. At this point, I noted that the young people and volunteers were now of Chinese, Eastern European, North and Sub-Saharan African, as well as Corsican and Italian, origin.

La Fraternité, the social centre where we were heading that day, offers another example of how religious organisations contribute to the liveability and vitality of the neighbourhood. La Fraternité was run by an association linked to a Protestant church. The aims and objectives were informed both by the principals of the Protestant missionary work and ‘popular’ or ‘workers’ education movements, and influenced by the pastor’s personal experience of growing up and being part of the struggle against the dictatorship in Uruguay. This is one more example of how transnational social fields shape local relations.
The religious leader of La Fraternité was well-connected with the political leaders of the city. For instance, he participated in the project ‘Marseille Espérance’ described in Part 1. La Fraternité was also funded by the same public grants that funded Art de Vivre and the welfare rights. The centre attracted people from a wider range of backgrounds than I had seen in other settings; certainly far more diverse than the choir. For example, on the day we turned up, a group of five men of Sub-Saharan African, North African and white European origin were outside the building having a cigarette, after enjoying the subsidised meal that was cooked by volunteers twice a week. Some cultural and social workers would also attend these meals. Other activities included arts and crafts activities, which seemed to attract a group of older people of white European background, gardening, French language classes for non-French speakers, that were open to all, and volunteering opportunities for people across the city, including the woman wearing a Muslim headscarf, who welcomed us and offered us tea or coffee.

Against this sketch of the neighbourhood, I now turn to introduce the cultural project of the choir.

‘Le quart d’heure marseillais’

When Thibalut and I arrived at the social centre of La Fraternité, a squat building set on a side street in the La Belle de Mai, the two directors of Art de Vivre were already in the building, along with a young white French woman, who was one of the arts administrators of the company. The choir participants were not on time. As we waited for their arrival I sensed a certain awkward irritation on the part of the cultural workers as they glanced at their watches and made comments about the ‘quart d’heure Marseillais’ (Marsaillaise quarter of an hour).121

The ‘quart d’heure marseillais’ is a familiar expression to describe what is often called ‘typically’ Marseillaise behaviour. Sometimes the term is used in a jocular fashion, sometimes it is claimed by people in Marseilles as some kind of badge of honour or source of pride; a means of showing disdain for the ‘Parisian’ or French concern with punctuality, sometimes, people in Marseilles of different socio-economic backgrounds used the term to disparage ‘local culture’; reinforcing stereotypes that associated

121 I interpreted this as frustration as I recalled how, when organising meetings in Kensington, I had sometimes had similar feelings when held up by people who turned up late or who refused to follow the ‘norms’ of meetings.
Marseilles with laziness and fecklessness (see also Herzfeld 2004). The phrase serves as a reminder of how Marseilles had an indexical link to socio-spatial *elsewhere* (Paris, France), in unequal relations of cultural and social power. In this instance, given that the term was used by cultural workers who defined themselves in an interview as categorically different to most people in the neighbourhood, it seemed to reinforce some of the hierarchical relations that distinguished the ‘non-local’ cultural workers from the participants.

*Tensions in understandings and experiences of space*

At about a quarter past two a group of five women, aged from their early 50s to mid 70s, walked in and spent five minutes chatting, exchanging the two-cheek kiss greeting and informal banter that is the social norm in lower socio-economic circles in Marseilles. They did not appear to be the slightest bit concerned about being late.

Informal conversations with cultural workers employed to run projects in impoverished neighbourhoods indicated that they thought that there was a direct benefit for participants in taking part in cultural activities in different venues, in contributing to what was described in official bids and the language of some cultural workers as “désenclavement” (“reducing isolation”). Implicitly, the people who were the targets of this policy, and the area in which they lived, were imagined as ‘segregated’ or excluded. They were imagined as becoming ‘integrated’ through links created by visits to different social and cultural institutions.

This could be the case; and for certain individuals in some projects I observed, meaningful social links were created. But the choir members tended to see the object of the choir differently: As I would learn later, the majority of the choir members preferred the choir to take place in its habitual location; the offices of the welfare rights organisation in Saint-Mauront, known as ‘le local’. *Le local* (literately ‘the place’) was situated on the social housing estate, where six out of the thirteen regular participants lived. Some people, Josephine for example, rarely came if it was at another location. Choir members’ preference for *le local* was not only influenced by its close proximity to where they lived. To outsiders this somewhat institutional office hidden behind unmarked steel doors could seem an intimidating venue. Yet many of the members clearly were more at ease in ‘their place’, where they could make themselves a coffee, use the phone if needed or take a break for a cigarette.
Urban violence

For some - including Sylvie - unwillingness to move around the city was also structured by the fear and experience of crime. Urban violence and criminality was a regular subject of conversation, and a consistent feature of local and national media, particularly the privately-owned, right-wing TV station that formed the mainstay of Sylvie’s viewing. Fear of crime affected how people, particularly women (including both Samia and Sylvie) moved around the city. It was also an embodied reality. During that initial choir session, members discussed a woman, known to the choir members, who was mugged and had her necklace stolen on leaving the local metro station by “des noirs” (some blacks). Two other members of the choir were also violently mugged while I was in the field (as was I).

Sometimes Sylvie, and other urban dwellers of around her age, compared contemporary violence to the historical period when Marseilles was regularly in the headlines for mafia-related criminal acts, carried out by people of Italian or Corsican origin. While racialised at the time, in retrospect the latter was often described as having a superior moral code and a sense of order, family and kinship. For many people, there was something qualitatively different about contemporary - racialised – violence. Ethnic or racial categorical descriptions were regularly used to talk about criminal, ‘uncivil’ behaviour, particularly of young people. Urban elites repeated these representations. In an interview, a local Councillor told me about the growing problem of the delinquency of the young ‘Comorians’, whom she described as having lost their way and being out of control. This has contributed to the racialisation and criminalisation of groups and areas (Zukin 1995). Further, the narratives and experiences of crime, and the stories of this neighbourhood as deprived and neglected legitimise processes of demolition, dispossession and transformation.

As well as being structured by age, gender, race and class, this fear and experience of crime needs to be seen in relation to broader processes of an unequal ‘securitisation’ of public space by the French state (Wacquant 2008). As part of the preparations for Marseilles Provence 2013, a prominent campaign to install CCTV cameras was carried out in the city centre. The mayor of Marseilles held a press conference to publicise the event. This was part of a broader campaign against ‘incivility’ that was considered necessary in order to ‘reconquer’ the public spaces around the Vieux Port (AGAM
On certain housing estates, national and local authorities have increased the high-profile police presence following periodic high-profile drug-related crimes. This has led to increases in stop-and-search of racialised people and heightened hostility between urban dwellers and forces of order (Fassin 2013). However, in other impoverished neighbourhoods such as Saint-Mauront, the presence of police was minimal. Additionally, the walk between the social housing estate and La Fraternité was physically demanding for many choir members, most of whom were aged over sixty and several of whom had health problems (including cardiac, respiratory and weight problems). Given the poor public transport in the area, only those who lived in the La Belle de Mai or who could squeeze into Christine’s car managed to attend the alternative venue. In retrospect, I interpreted their late arrival as a means to non-verbally express their disapprobation for the change of venue. As a choir member, I experienced a similar disregard for punctuality on occasions when the location of the choir was changed at the last moment. It felt like what de Certeau (1984:xix) called the “minor practices” and “tactics” of the weak to express divergent interests from dominant organisations of space and time.

Using the choir to explore bounded and unbounded social networks

When I first met the choir I considered the members to be a relatively homogenous group. Compared to the make-up of the neighbourhood, where nearly 20 percent of the population are foreign-born, and when compared to the users of La Fraternité or the profile of people in the public square in Saint-Mauront, the fact that all regular members were white Europeans was of note.

The relative homogeneity of the members was structured, in part, by Art de Vivre’s rejection of couching their work in terms of ‘social’ outcomes. This organisation defended its work in terms of artistic excellence rather than social objectives. Unlike the work of T.Public (or La Fraternité), where there was a deliberate attempt to reach a wider cross-section of society, flyers, posters or public advertisements were not produced to promote their activity across the city. Instead, they relied on existing institutional networks to enlist ‘participants’. In this instance, the partner institution was

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the welfare rights organisation. This dynamic reinforced the neighbourhood focus of the membership, and which tended to institutionalise group closure along the grounds of proximity, and ethno-cultural homogeneity.

*Institutionalising closed social networks*

Christine was a key to understanding the ways in which culture, understandings and performances of social relations played out in this project. She was somebody described by one cultural worker based in the neighbourhood as being “très dans le réseau associative” *(very well embedded in local networks)*. As I discovered, Christine was considered a ‘community leader’ by a number of cultural workers, urban policy-makers and ordinary urban dwellers. She was a central link in bringing together different webs of relations that made up the choir.

Christine had lived on that social housing estate in Saint-Mauront for almost all of her life. She had developed particular understandings of the desirability of certain forms of social order, influenced by her Italian roots, her Catholicism and her involvement in the French Communist Party. She had been involved in urban and social development since the 1970s, as a member of the Communist Youth of France, a parent, a volunteer and activist and then as a paid worker in various local branches of national welfare rights and housing organisations. She was a driving force behind the presence of the welfare rights organisation on the estate, which also served as a neighbourhood association; organising activities for children as well as social evenings.

As a volunteer for the welfare rights organisation, Christine wrote funding bids on behalf of the welfare rights organisation, applying to various public bodies including those responsible for the Urban Contract for Social Cohesion. Like some of the members of the face painting association that I observed, Christine seemed to manifest what W.E.B Dubois defined as “double consciousness” *(Black 2007: 393)*. Dubois describes double-consciousness as:

“A particular sensation…this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” *(in Black, ibid: 394).*

Christine often described and othering ‘ordinary’ social relations from an institutional or ‘outsider’ perspective. This visible in the decoration of the offices of the welfare rights
organisation, which she had overseen. Along with formal photos of many
neighbourhood events that she had helped to organise along with other residents over
the years, lining the walls were the words; “Our estate. Our quartier, Saint-Mauront,
Our city, Marseilles”, printed on laminated A4 paper and strung across the ceiling.
Formal stand-alone displays of the massive urban renovation schemes occupied one side
of the room, part of the ‘formal consultation’ for schemes that had been carried out in
the 3rd arrondissement since 2009.

Reflective of her role as a ‘community leader’, working with/for urban development
agencies, Christine described in an interview how the project manager of the public
regeneration agency responsible for the renovation of large swathes of the north of the
city, had asked her for a group of residents who could take part in a consultation
process. He requested: “a group that can be positive in their way of thinking and not
just critical”. 123

Christine’s influence and credibility with policy-makers gave greater weight to
applications for social housing made on behalf of others, or requests to make
improvements on the estate. Her involvement was instrumental in the inclusion of new
recreational spaces to be created as part of the wider urban development programmes.
This ability to affect change increased her social status, particularly with older people of
a similar social milieu to Christine, such as Sylvie. Sylvie told me that the estate would
be “l’enfer” (hell) if Christine were not there. One of the reasons that Sylvie attended
the choir was to maintain her links with Christine.

People were recruited to the choir through different channels. Most were involved in the
dense, highly-localised web of relationships, developed over decades, in what was
previously the industrialised district of Marseilles but Christine was a significant
structuring influence: With greater educational and social capital than many women of
her age on the estate, she had a certain moral authority, power and behaviour that
influenced participation. My introduction to the choir demonstrates Christine’s position
nicely. On that first day at La Fraternité, it was she, rather than the directors of the arts
organisation, who presented me to the group, telling them I was looking for somebody
to host me during my research (I added that I would contribute to household bills during

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my stay.) Sylvie had then looked up quickly, glanced at Christine and then said, “I’ve got a spare room”. This was a rather unusual gesture on her behalf, and she later told me that she would never have dared to do this, had it not been for Christine’s endorsement. Christine said, with an almost schoolmarm-like manner: “Yes, I was thinking of you”, and the deal was done.

**Ethnicity and group closure**

The fact that I was white and a women needs to be considered when reflecting on my incorporation within the social space of the choir. People of different ethno-national backgrounds made up a significant percentage of the users of the welfare rights organisation. All were helped by staff and volunteers in their struggles for better housing or benefits, yet very few people of visible minority background who came to the welfare rights office were told about the choir or encouraged to attend.

There seemed to be two broad dynamics at work. Firstly, for most choir members, they saw the choir as working largely independently from the arts organisation funded to develop the project: Members of the group seemed to understand the choir as ‘their’ social space, a controlled environment where they could take a break from work, step away from any difficult personal relationships, forget the daily grind as they tried to balance their household accounts and cope with their sometimes violent urban environments.

Individual choir members were part of loose social networks that were not structured around ethno-national difference, but for the choir they tended to invite ‘people like them’. Notions of who was ‘like them’ seemed to be configured in relation to narratives of ethno-national, cultural and religious difference that circulated in nationally and locally. Sylvie regularly expressed a visceral aversion to references to people who wore the burka (which had just been banned in the French public sphere) and choir members regularly spoke of the need for ‘integration’ of “Arabes” in ways that disregarded actual practices and neighbourly relations that were built up over shared experiences and values (see Jensen 2015 for similar observations in Copenhagen). Discussions took place in a national context, where the dominant understanding was that people had to ‘become French’ by adopting ‘French’ values, habits and ways of life (Mitchell 2011: 415).
More than most, Christine was very aware that the choir was funded as a project to promote social cohesion. According to some other choir members, she was very “ouverte” towards people of different background; “trop ouverte” (too open)” said one of the welfare rights workers said, as she repeated criticisms about large immigrant families benefiting from the French social security system. However Christine’s ‘openness’ was also coloured by French Republican framing of appropriate behaviour in public spaces. On one occasion, she told me how she had approached a group of women waiting in the offices of the welfare rights office for their case to be treated, talking and laughing in Arabic, as they did so. She described how she said to them:

“Hey there! I know very well that you are not taking the mickey out of me, that you are not laughing at me. But you are in a public place. When you are in a public place, try and speak French, because people see you and they see that you look at them and laugh...you could put their backs up”.

Such understandings shaped membership of the choir; although again, these barriers were not rigid. Two women of North African origin - both well enmeshed in social and cultural networks in the neighbourhood that transcended ethnic difference - did join the choir for a short time.

**Gender**

Gender was a significant factor in determining membership. While the choirmaster and artistic directors were men, at least 80 percent of the choir members were women. The same was true for participants of the face painting project. In the productions by T.Public, approximately 60 percent of the participants were women.

The majority were married or in relationships strongly structured by gendered norms that governed the behaviour of ‘respectable’ women in public spaces. Male partners tended to socialise in same-gender relations in public spaces such as cafés or park benches. Further, as emerges in research in other impoverished urban districts (Susser and Schneider 2003), the majority of the women in the choir had a limited education and had worked in low-paid and/or insecure employment, or were on social security benefits. One member, a former youth worker told me, had been a manager of a social centre but gave up her job because it did not cover the cost of childcare. These observations speak to broader patterns of gendered processes of capitalist production;
with women generally earning less than men. Additionally, almost all the volunteers and workers from the welfare rights organisation were women, as elsewhere in the world, playing a major role in contributing to the liveability and sociability of urban life (Castells 2002).

* A question of taste

Before I was familiar with the codes, and partly influenced by my time at Kensington Regeneration, where I had been trained to think about ‘bringing together people of different backgrounds’, I invited a few people to participate in the choir, including a young white woman at college and Sylvie’s North African neighbour. Neither accepted. Samia’s explanation for refusal was that she did not feel comfortable with the cultural and social behaviour that she associated with “le local”, which often involved heavy smoking, jokes thick with innuendo, alcohol-based apéros, as well as the presence of dogs. This was a useful reminder that non-participation could be based on choice rather than discrimination. The other woman could not participate because the time clashed with her studies. Also, she was told by a cultural worker that the choice of songs from the 1940s was probably not to her taste, a notion I explore later.

* Unbounded social networks

It is worth comparing the choir with other social and cultural networks in which choir members participated, that were more open. The neighbourhood street parties organised by the welfare rights organisation would attract a range of people of ethno-national backgrounds and ages, transforming the courtyard of the estate from a place of everyday passage to a public arena. In an interview, Christine described the situation in classic terms of multiculturalism:

> “When we do a social event...or the neighbourhood fête...it is even better because everybody brings something, so people don’t owe other people. One person would cook a recipe from his country, he’d let us try okra, or another lets us try the tagines, and everybody brings something, or pizzas, and everybody contributes something, and we share everything, we put everything on a table and we share”.

Christine’s language echoed with an ethos of participation, rights and responsibilities with which I was familiar in Kensington. However, when I participated in these
‘multicultural’ events, held in the public space of the housing estate, I observed an informality about them, with greetings shouted out to people passing of different ages, genders and backgrounds. This echoed with neighbourhood fetes I had attended in Liverpool but transcended some of the structured ‘social engineering’ that I described in relation to the face painting project in Liverpool.

The regular bingo evenings, which were organised by the welfare rights organisation, were also attended by a diverse range of people. The first event I attended attracted about forty people, from the social housing estate and beyond. As well as spanning more than three generations, I was surprised to see a black African woman helping one of the choir members take money and distribute bingo cards at the entry. I learned that she was a member of the same Catholic church in Saint-Mauront as two members of the choir. Similarly to other inner city areas across Europe, church congregations seemed to be recruited on a neighbourhood basis (Wimmer 2004). A young woman of North African origin, who lived in the stigmatised high-rise flats in ‘lower’ Saint-Mauront, also attended, having come into contact with Christine and her team, who had helped her with a housing issue. I commented in my field notes that: "there seems to be nothing ‘ethnic’ or ‘cross cultural’ about this, just the simple pleasure of getting a ‘full house’ or sharing a joke: everyday interactions in public spaces". (Each time I returned to the site between 2011-2015 I noted that the backgrounds of people involved in the association had become more multi-ethnic.)

**Cultural distinctions: tensions in cultural value**

‘Provençal tradition’ versus ‘elite internationalism’

Christine had grown up in an Italian family where singing was the normal cultural pastime. She and her sister, who was also a member, had an encyclopaedic memory for songs from the 1940s and 1950s. Christine had a certain influence in the choice of songs that we sang, and her choices reflected this era. These songs had a cultural and social value for some members, such as her sister, Sylvie and other members of the same age, resonated with patterns of nostalgia for a previous, better time or place. I had observed similar patterns in Provençal cultural groups based in Marseilles, many of whom seemed to participate in Provençal language classes, folk dances and craft activities as a means to escape from the disorder and struggle of the city.
The value accorded to such ‘traditional’ forms of cultural expression came through more forcefully on the occasions when choir members wanted to show me the “real Marseilles”. Over the months, different members of the choir took me on guided visits to the city centre (it is not insignificant that the city centre is seen as a tourist destination, somewhere ‘out of the ordinary’); gave me a box-set of a trilogy of films from the 1930s by Marcel Pagnol; and a book on the Marseilles accent. When I left the field I was given some chinaware decorated in Provençal style, similar to the rural scenes and ‘Provençal’ ornaments that decorated the flats of some choir members.

I regularly heard from choir members and their friends and family, that this ‘local culture’ was not valued by the city’s urban decision-makers. On one occasion, Christine showed me with pride a photo of a dilapidated house in Saint Mauront where the renowned sculpture of Italian origin, César Baldaccini, was born. She used the state of the building to comment that “our heritage” was not showcased in current urban cultural policies such as the European Capital of culture. Members of the Provençal group that I followed told me that the municipality no longer funded ‘Provençal culture’, and cited Algerian and Comorian associations that had been funded instead. They told me that there was a deliberate policy by urban elites in Marseilles to develop a more “international identity” for the city.

However, as explored in Part 1, elite understandings and values were less clear cut as this.124 Within the framework of the Marseilles-Provence 2013 project, ‘Provençal culture’ was accorded a certain value by certain city leaders, particularly in relation to place-marketing strategies operated at the ‘metropolitan’ spatial scale. This identity was also considered a valuable asset for tourism strategies aimed at the Anglo-American or East Asian market. For instance, some of the Provençal groups received sponsorship from the Chamber of Commerce to perform Provençal dances to welcome tourists arriving on cruise liners to the city. Nevertheless, working within hierarchies of value underpinning the choir, nostalgia for ‘tradition’ was at odds with the aesthetic objectives of the arts organisation.

*Tensions between ‘populaire’ and ‘savant’ culture*

124 See Maisetti 2012 for interviews with elite policy-makers trying to distance themselves from a ‘provincial’ Provence identity seen as antithetical to the rescaling place marketing initiatives.
In classic terms, Christine had the most ‘legitimate’ cultural capital in the choir. When she was a child she had received formal training at the conservatoire of Marseilles. Her voice was clearly the most highly-trained; many of the rest of the choir felt that they “couldn’t sing” (including me). Despite a certain authority that this gave her, this was not what cultural workers valued when working with the choir.

The artistic work of Art de Vivre was defined by in interview as inspired by “an appreciation for ‘popular’ working class art forms”. In publicity material, their creative production was described as working with people from “modest backgrounds” to “raise marginal forms of creative expression to the ranks of works of art.” There was a preference for the spontaneous wit, lack of pretentiousness and creativity of the ‘classes populaires’ which could then be transformed into ‘art’. It is a conception that is inflected with hierarchical understandings of aesthetic knowledge. In rhetorical terms, social elites were able to objectivise ‘ordinary culture’, and judge what is or is not art (Back 2015; Bennett 2013; Skeggs 2015)

Culture and order

Additionally, Christine’s ‘old-fashioned’ taste and sense of order were not appreciated by all choir members. When she was not there, the ambiance was more relaxed, and the ‘formal’, aesthetic focus would fade. Choir members were more likely to take small ‘liberties’ such as smoking in the local and jokes flew more freely. For people, such as Josephine, who joined predominately ‘to have a laugh’, Christine’s attitude, as well as the choice of songs (“just old stuff”) eventually led to her discontinuing with the choir.

Promoting ‘local culture’: The opening of L’Espace Lecture

Christine drew on her institutional networks to organised opportunities for the choir to sing around the neighbourhood, including at L’Œuvre and at a school fete. On one occasion she told us that she had suggested to the local mayor that the choir should sing La Marseillaise at the citizenship ceremonies for new French citizens, seemed to organise performances of the choir to present a certain form of ‘local’ French culture. This did not happen, however she was also instrumental behind the decision that choir should at the opening of L’Espace Lecture.

The Espace Lecture was a new cultural institution that had been funded by politique de la ville and national and local authority funding. In essence, it was a simplified library,
run by the Cultural Association for Reading and Writing Spaces in the Mediterranean (ACELEM), an association that had been funded by City Hall from 1993 to promote literacy for people of visible migrant backgrounds. Most such associations were embedded in quartiers further north. This opening of an Espace Lecture in the 3rd arrondissement had been on the table for 19 years, but only came to fruition as the nationally-funded programme of area-based programme of demolition/reconstruction (ANRU) was launched, part of a plan to give a “nouveau visage” (a new face) to Saint-Mauront.¹²⁵

At the inauguration, the choir was somewhat marginalised from the formality of speeches. When the organisers had been reminded of our presence, we were invited to sing a few songs. This was followed by a range of speeches from a panoply of urban policy-makers including: the Prefecture, elected representatives from the municipality (responsible for culture and urban development) and the directors of the ANRU urban development agency. Common themes were about the role of literature and reading as a means to ‘integrate’ people into French society and culture, and Saint-Mauront’s new position in the greater city-centre.

All dignitaries were white, apart from the Senegalese director of the centre. Two black African artists had also been invited to inaugurate the centre. Their presence also seemed overlooked, and they were only asked to perform at the point when institutional actors began networking. As the musicians were playing, and some of the choir members dancing, Christine presented me to some of the officials in the room. I was introduced as “notre petite anglaise” (our little English representative). She described me as having brought an “international dimension” to the neighbourhood. Given that Saint-Mauront was one of the areas of the city with the highest proportion of ‘primo-arrivants’ and foreign-born population of non-European background, this implied hierarchies of values where white ‘internationalness’ was placed above non-white ‘migrant’ status.

“It’s not cultural”

When asked what, if any ‘cultural activities’ they were involved in, most choir members denied that they did anything ‘cultural’, Josephine and Sylvie both refuted that the choir was ‘cultural’, a term which has much stronger elite aesthetic overtones in France. Cultural activities were elite activities that took part in formal arts institutions or by ‘professionals’. In contrast to the objective of artistic excellence promoted by Art de Vivre, the choir was seen as “loisir” (a pastime) and “détente” (relaxation). It was the opportunity to take a break from work (the two workers for the welfare rights bureau were allowed to come), a chance to come together, exchange, “rigoler” (have a laugh), and share a cigarette and a coffee together. Some, like Josephine came looking for relief from the burden of domestic labour, care work and difficult personal social relations.

In 2009, after three years, this perceived lack of engagement in the ‘aesthetic’ dimension of the project on the part of the participants, the lax approach to time-keeping and the long cigarette breaks, influenced Art de Vivre’s decision to discontinue the choir. In what proved to be an interesting interplay of power relations and struggles over values and meaning, they were not able to do so.

*Challenges to hierarchies of value*

As mentioned in Part 2, this was a particularly sensitive time for small, local cultural associations. Like other small, local arts associations, this association found themselves dislodged by the cultural activities produced by MP2013, which increasingly sought to work with ‘international’, or European arts companies, to produce work in the impoverished neighbourhoods that could complement their urban restructuring projects (Sevin 2013). As was also noted in Part 2, their principal public funders, notably the funders working under the remit of the CUCS, were becoming disillusioned about the effectiveness of cultural projects in delivering social change: They were increasingly demanding ‘evidence’ and ‘evaluations’ of what worked. It meant that complaints by local residents had a certain influence.

Christine and certain other members of the choir mobilised and lobbied local grant-makers, so that Art de Vivre’s future funding for cultural work in the neighbourhood became dependent upon the continuation of this project. While the directors of Art de Vivre had greater cultural and social capital, they were dependent upon associations and local residents who had links to key urban institutions. The arts organisation continued
to run the choir for another two years, though there was less interest in its aesthetic function.

Sometimes, certain artistic directions would filter down to the group. For example, after the Christmas break, Thibault told us that the theme of the choir for that semester was to be “voyage” (travel). I assumed that this choice was influenced by objectives of funders to promote social cohesion and positive attitudes to diversity, as with the work I supported in Liverpool. On two occasions, before a public performance, an artistic director would arrive with a box of stage props or fancy dress costumes and insist that we dress up for our concert, as though to gloss our ‘ordinary’ performance with an aesthetic veneer.

As with the changes in location from time to time, and performances at L’Espace Lecture, these interventions felt as if they were related to funding criteria. There was no preparation and little choice. I baulked at this; it seemed to be the opposite of ‘cultural democracy’. In the intimacy of conversations snatched over cigarettes or a coffee, some members criticised or made jokes about what we were being asked to do. Nevertheless, all played the game. In some ways, their behaviour was similar to Herzfeld’s artisans in Crete. The members were accommodating at the level of practice but rhetorically subordinate and critical of power (Herzfeld 2004).

In 2012, after a period of limited communication with the welfare rights organisation, no doubt linked to a reduction in funding, Art de Vivre stopped funding the choir. It moved on to deliver cultural activities in another neighbourhood of the city. For a few months, some of the members would continue to meet to sing each Thursday afternoon in the offices of the welfare rights organisation; but that too eventually stopped. When I came back to the field in 2013 and 2014, most people told me that they missed the choir, but no one had the force or capacity to organise their own.

**The quartier, culture and broader processes of restructuring**

Nicolas Burlaud suggested in his film described in Part 2 that the European Capital of Culture project had been particularly effective in quashing opposition to city centre urban regeneration because “nobody can be against culture”. Yet, in Saint-Mauront complaints were directed at some cultural-inflected development in the neighbourhood.
In an interview, following on from her remark that “the whole world is turning to Saint-
Mauront”, Christine told me,

“I love to sing, I love to act, I love all that...but...if we only have culture we
are missing something, because when people go out, they’ll be happy for an
hour, they’ll see this, they’ll feel relaxed. Then they return home and they
find themselves once again in their slum...with their children who don’t
know where to go because it’s too small, and what have we gained? What
has been gained?”

Because of their involvement in the welfare rights organisation, Christine and the
workers were occasionally offered free or reduced-priced tickets to see theatre
productions at one of a number of public theatres in Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de
Mai, including one just opposite the group of social housing. The tickets were refused
as they felt that they were always “stuck behind a pillar”. The cultural work of certain
theatres was also rejected, described often as “bidon”; a familiar term that can be
translated as ‘phoney’ or ‘false’ but in this context meant ‘lame,’ or ‘a waste of time’.

Public funding for the cultural activities of the Comptoir were also critiqued. While
located in the quartier; for some local residents, it was not of it. It was seen by as a
closed space to which they had little access. Choir members only entered the Comptoir
when invited within the framework of their project. Some members complained about
the lack of meaningful employment opportunities that culturally-inflected projects had
brought to the area. One choir member was employed for a short time as a cleaner for
one of the arts organisations, but left when she felt that she was not treated with respect
by some of the cultural workers (sometimes referred to in the familiar or pejorative
terms as: “les cultureux”. Although there was also acknowledgement that organisations
in the Comptoir were involved in organising participative arts projects and a
neighbourhood festival, which were valued locally.

The European Capital of Culture has not featured direction so far in this section
because, in 2010, very few people had heard about it. More so than Liverpool, the
project seemed very distant from the lives of the ‘ordinary people’ with whom I was
carrying out my fieldwork. As noted in Part 1, unlike Liverpool, there was no MP2013
funding for grassroots projects. Indeed, in 2013, the annual neighbourhood festival, organised by social and cultural organisations in the neighbourhood, bringing together middle class cultural workers with people of working class and visible migrant backgrounds faced severe funding cuts, because of a diversion of resources to the European Capital of Culture project. In that year, I was visiting Josephine at her house when she caught the end of a report on the local news on her perpetually-switched on television. She said, “Capital of Culture! Capital of Languages more like!” with disgust, which I interpreted as her sense of alienation at the international focus of the programme, and alienation in the face of population change in the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, some members of the choir were broadly in favour of the city centre embellishments brought about by the European Capital of Culture, agreeing with dominant ideas that the city needed to be transformed for ‘tourists’. In conversations, the city was often described as a disgrace, with the presence of racialised street traders, as well as the unruly behaviour of Marseillaise people more generally often mentioned as a cause of the city’s stigmatisation. These comments came from people of all backgrounds. I met a number of people of North African origin living in the 3rd arrondissement who often voiced the same complaints; contrasting the chaos of Marseilles with the calm of Aix-en-Provence or the tourist districts of Alger.

**Experiencing cultural policy post-2013**

When I returned to the social housing estate in 2014, there was still a strong cultural inflection to the major ANRU renovations in the area. This was very different to Kensington. Resources were increasingly concentrated around prestigious cultural institutions, such as the La Friche. The cinema where I watched *La fête est finie* had been taken over by La Friche and decorated on the outside with a vast panoply of different faces representing the ethnic make-up of the neighbourhood. In parallel, a new dynamic of encouraging cultural workers to work alongside ‘ordinary’ urban dwellers seemed to have emerged. Some choir members had started attending some of the free events organised at La Friche, including the outdoor film nights during the summer. They told me, laughing, that they turned up with their picnics and their children, but they had never watched the films, which were not “proper films; they have subtitles”.

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and subsequently they talked the whole way through the event. While having different cultural tastes from *les bobos*, there was a sense that they were welcome.

Each time I return, I note another building has been knocked down as part of the national urban renewal scheme, new social and private apartments in the process of being built, and public spaces, such as the square where I would drink my coffee, was undergoing refurbishment. Certain choir members were involved in setting up an unconnected group that deliberately refused state aid, as a means to be able to express their opinions about the urban developments in the area without feeling compromised. Others said, with a sense of resignation and powerlessness, that as well as changing the ‘face’ of Saint-Mauront, “*they*” want to change the population.

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**Liverpool: Exploring networks from the outside, in**

**Setting the scene**

I take a different line to describe and analyse social and cultural practices in Liverpool, because of the distinctive ways in which I came into contact with most of the individuals and groups I discuss. I met most through my role in Kensington Regeneration (see Part 2). As described above, I started out by understanding social interactions in terms of the need to promote cultural diversity, tackle racism and increase participation. Initially, the face painting project was set up in order to encourage social networks that would transcend imagined barriers of ethnic difference. I began the project from the offices of Kensington Regeneration based in the ‘Job Bank’.

**The Job Bank: new institutional spaces of urban governance**

The Job Bank is an institutional space that epitomises new forms and ideologies of urban governance in Liverpool. Like a plethora of other such new-builds that have sprung up across impoverished areas around the UK in the 1990s and 2000s, the Job Bank was funded by various pots of urban regeneration money (in this case, EU Objective One funding), and set up in parallel with the local authority infrastructure. It
was considered a ‘community-owned’ building because it was owned and managed by a third sector organisation, on the board of which sat a small clique of white Liverpudlians, connected through kinship and neighbourly relations. Following the objectives of the European funding, its primary aim was to provide local jobs and to “assist the community to develop and thrive”, reflecting the economic and communitarian focus of this EU social fund.

The expensive rent that was levied in order to make this building financially viable meant that the Job Bank was financially inaccessible to most local groups and associations. Instead, the building was rented by some of the mushrooming semi-autonomous or private bodies, funded by local and Central Government programmes to deliver different public services. In this instance the building housed sports, health, employment and training agencies, as well as the offices of Kensington Regeneration. As is increasingly common, most of the ‘regeneration professionals’ lived outside the area.

On top of the prohibitively expensive rents, access to the venue was difficult because of its ‘out-of-the-way’ physical location. The building was situated on the corner of a junction, on a wedge-shaped strip between two busy roads. Adjacent to it were the drab buildings of a police station, a probation services centre and a social security office. Somewhat ironically, the offices of Kensington Regeneration were situated outside the official Kensington Regeneration boundaries. It was an institutional ‘non-place;’ on the wrong side of the road from the ‘community’ or the ‘neighbourhood’.

The ‘neighbourhood,’ on the other side of the road from the Job Bank, was typical of urban landscapes in former industrial districts across the country. Streets of terraced housing stretched north to Kensington high street, intersected by major arterial roads that headed east into Liverpool city centre. Many of the 19th century buildings flanking the main road had shop fronts at ground level. These included a sandwich bar, a seamstress, and a designer clothes store, all run by white British retailers; an Indian-run off-licence, two ‘Chinese’ chip shops, run by families of Hong Kong Chinese background and a Yemeni-run newsagents. There were two public houses and, above a corner shop, a popular dance studio that had trained many young people in the area.

127 www.parksoptions.co.uk/job_bank, accessed 12/06/2013
Reflecting dynamics I observed in Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de Mai in Marseilles, this row of shops, and the streets of terraced housing were to be razed to the ground under the housing market renewal scheme described in Part 2, breaking up social networks and displacing local people. None of the local businesses would be replaced, affecting street-level sociability and belying claims that this renovation scheme would increase opportunities for local employment.

To arrive at the Job Bank from the ‘neighbourhood’, visitors had to negotiate crossing the busy road junction that lacked any form of pedestrian crossing. They were then faced with what could seem an intimidating array of receptionists, signing-in sheets and swipe cards before they could access the corporate-style meeting rooms, to attend various ‘community’ meetings, called by different urban planners.

As was the case with the Comptoir (see above), this building was in close proximity to an impoverished urban area, but access for many local residents was not on their terms. I emphasise this, as it was from this institutional social space that I was charged to forge relations between people who were described, in urban policy terms, as isolated one from the other, and marginalised from the neighbourhood, the city and ‘society’.

**Missing social networks when ‘seeing like a state’**

Similar to those cultural workers I observed in Marseilles, who grouped different quartiers of the 3rd arrondissements under the label the ‘La Belle de Mai’, operating from the offices of the Job Bank, I initially had little sense of the everyday and complex social geographies of the area. I was an ‘outsider’ with few local connections, whose remit was to promote social cohesion and integration. Again, in ways that were comparable to the practices of cultural workers I observed in Marseilles trying to recruit ‘local people’ or ‘ordinary urban dwellers’, my lack of local knowledge meant that I used existing services, associations and informal networks operating in the area to develop the face painting project. These included youth clubs, community centres, schools, religious organisations, neighbourhood and street residents’ associations, well-established and newly-formed ethnic or religious groups, refugee support agencies as well as other informal and professional contacts that Pete and I had acquired over time. Paradoxically, I did this while working within a narrative framework that positioned impoverished urban dwellers as alienated, marginalised and segregated.
I begin this section of the thesis by describing the facilities, institutions and networks of networks - operating at different social scales - through which I recruited members for Rainbow Faces. The purpose is to situate the social relations that I saw emerge within multi-scalar, multi-dimensional relations that contributed to making particular urban places (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016). It is from this basis that I explore how different individuals and groups responded to the face painting project. I then describe the different aspects of the face painting project developed and how these were experienced and valued. Holding in view the statements made within the European Capital of Culture bid, for instance that: “the cultural map of Liverpool is grounded in the experiences of traditionally under-represented groups and individuals (LCC 2003: 101), I tease out how the implementation of culturally-inflected urban development in the city differentially affected the possibilities for impoverished people to participate in culture and city-making.

*Looking for ordinariness when researching alongside ‘migrants’ and the ‘urban poor’*

This analysis builds on my experiences in the choir of Saint-Mauront as well as insights gleaned between September 2011 and February 2012, when I was living with a group of women seeking asylum, in a hostel, on the peripheries of what was the Kensington New Deal for Community area. It is common in literature on refugees and migrants to assume that the experiences of transnational migrants struggling to overcome legal, economic and social barriers are categorically different from those of other ‘urban poor’. It is an approach that can contribute to the racialisation and othering of ‘migrants’ and can participate in the construction of the category of ‘white British working class’.

I do not wish to imply that the experiences and opportunity structures of all the people alongside whom I conducted my research were the same. Those women who had applied for asylum and whose cases had been refused, were cut off from all sources of state aid. Most of them had limited English, and all had experienced violent rupture from family members and homelands and considerable isolation in the city. But crucially, they were, nevertheless, embedded within different local social networks. They were living in accommodation attached to a Catholic church; their basic material needs were provided by a refugee support charity and topped up by resources accessed through different personal networks of religion, kinship, ethnicity and neighbourliness. Three of the women seeking asylum were involved in a number of free activities with
organisations that had a deliberately creative or artistic dimension. Two were involved in informal employment, which provided them with money to maintain local and translocal social networks.

My research alongside the women seeking asylum gave me insights into some of the ways in which impoverished people engaged in and evaluated formal cultural projects - or not - as they struggled to create meaningful existences, in the face of huge structural disadvantage (see also Sen 2014). My observations and conversations with them offered understandings of the ways incorporation in cultural and city-making practices was affected by forced exclusion from the formal labour market and most other education and training opportunities, as well as marginalisation from bureaucratic structures through low levels of literacy, a lack of confidence or mental health issues. Many of these factors structured the involvement of members of the face painting project.

Equally, living alongside these women seeking asylum helped me become more attentive to the ways in which ordinary urban sociabilities and commonalities emerged between people imagined as socially or culturally different and to the differential importance of and ways of experiencing the ‘neighbourhood’ as local, national and transnational understandings and experiences collided with the specificities of Kensington.

**Neighbourhood networks**

1) *Youth and community centres*

The first three face painting training sessions took place in 2005 in three different youth and community centres within the Kensington New Deal for Communities zone. Like the welfare rights offices in Saint-Mauront, all three buildings were surrounded by dense, residential housing, nearly 90 percent of which fell within the lowest tax-band in the city. Two of the centres were situated in streets of 19th century terraced housing, two thirds of which was privately owned or privately rented (in line with the city average). The third centre was located in a small ‘suburban-style’ housing estate, built after urban clearance in the 1960s and 1970s. The cheaply-built and functional youth and community centres were decorated with colourful murals and graffiti on the interior walls of courtyards. They were protected by fences, barbed wire, metal shutters and
CCTV cameras, reflecting both the fear of, and the experience of, crime in this part of the city.

**Race, ethnicity and territoriality**

As with the majority of community centres in the Kensington area, but different to those in Liverpool 8, half a mile to the south; all of the centres were run by white Liverpudlians. All of the youth workers I met there were white British, the majority were Liverpool-born. In common with neighbourhood-based associations in other impoverished areas of cities, these under-funded centres tended to recruit members on a basis of kinship networks and spatial proximity. Most of the young people who participated in the youth schemes were white British, although this would alter over time as cheap rent and the bigger size of terraced-houses made the area popular with people with larger families, notably recent migrants.

When I was working in the offices of Kensington Regeneration, I regularly heard the areas in which these youth centres were based described as ‘racist’. I interviewed a white resident of the Kensington area who had been involved in running one of the social centres.\(^{128}\) He acknowledged that tensions between neighbours did occur that were seen in terms of racial or ethnic difference and concurred that complaints had been made by long-term residents about the presence of new-comers, as money identified for improving cross-cutting issues such as health or housing was seen as being diverted to pay for unanticipated costs associated with the changing profile of the local population, including translation services and English classes for those who did not speak English. For this interviewee, if additional monies had been made available to deal with the additional needs in the area, some of these tensions would have been avoided. He understood the charges of racism as politically motivated, a way of framing criticisms by people living in the area concerning the ways the Kensington Regeneration project was being managed.

Notwithstanding the somewhat intimidating exterior of the building and the reputation for racism, in each venue we were made welcome by the staff and young people, as we set up the ‘multicultural’ face painting training. Half of the places were offered to people from the centre and the other half were taken up by young people, contacted via

\(^{128}\) LI27
my own networks. For the centre managers and youth workers, working with outside organisations was not new. The youth centres were accustomed to hosting one-off arts-based workshops that would be delivered in various centres, as part of the ‘increasing participation’ work of city centre cultural organisations.

For the cash-strapped youth workers dealing with cuts to youth service provision, the face painting project was valued as a means to offer new, creative activities for volunteers, trainee youth workers and young people. Staff saw the potential pleasure and benefits of the activity. Tony, a white Liverpudlian youth worker in his early 20s, attended a training course with some young people and came to one of the first Rainbow Faces meetings. None of the courses led to the recruitment of regular volunteers to take part in the Kensington Cultural Calendar or the Rainbow Faces project.

This was also the result when I organised face painting training sessions at the St Michael’s Irish Community Centre, a squat building which - from my state-eye perspective in any case - was located on the northern boundary of the Kensington New Deal for Communities area. In administrative terms, it was situated on the edge of the wards of Kensington and Everton, and came under the jurisdiction of the Catholic parish that was offering shelter to the women seeking asylum with whom I lived. It is worth a short detour to consider the shifting perceptions and experiences of Irish immigration and Irishness in Liverpool, as it provides a valuable prism through which to explore changing understandings and construction of race, whiteness and cultural value in this UK city.

*Organising and representing Irishness in Liverpool*

The incorporation of Irish migrants to Liverpool shares many parallels with Italian immigration to Marseilles. Irish people have been part of the fabric of the city for a number of centuries, but there was a seismic change in the 1840s, as over two million Irish refugees passed through Liverpool, fleeing famine, persecution and poverty in their country of origin. Many hoped to immigrate to the New World. Large numbers were forced to remain because they were either stricken with sickness or unable to afford the onward passage. By the late 19th century, Irish people made up over 20 percent of the population of Liverpool (Belchem 2000a).
Class, religion and economic and social resources inflected the incorporation of Irish people into the city. Impoverished Catholic Irish tended to settle near the docks, living alongside other colonial and racialised subjects and impoverished urban dwellers on the look-out for casual work opportunities. Vast numbers also migrated to the “instant slums” of the terraced housing in the north of the city (Belchem 2000a). Better-off Protestants mainly lived in the south of the city and their incorporation into the city was generally without an ethnic inflection. In contrast, impoverished Irish Catholic migrants faced rhetoric that echoes current debates on asylum and immigration. Describing their presence as a burden on the local ‘English’ taxpayer, municipal leaders tended to refer to racialised Irish populations in terms of moral reprobation (Belchem 2000a). In the absence of local government support, impoverished migrants relied on kinship, ethnic and religious networks, as well as formal and informal work opportunities, in order to survive in the face of dire poverty. As is the case today, religious institutions such as churches played an important role, providing food and shelter as well as administering religious rites.

Residential concentration of people of Irish Catholic origin was broken up by the housing clearance programmes, but areas north of Kensington remained strongholds for Irish Catholicism until the end of the 1980s. Conversely, the south of the city was associated with the Protestant Orange Order. Older people in the Kensington area continued to understand the social organisation of the city in these terms.

Irishness and place-making and marketing

As seen in Part 1, there was some acknowledgement of the presence of the Irish (and Welsh and Scottish) in the city in place-marketing campaigns at the turn of the 20th century. However, for most of the rest of the 20th century, the Irish presence in the city was largely eschewed in formal representations, as Irishness was associated with sectarian riots and struggles for Irish independence, leading to the city being daubed the ‘Belfast of England’ (Neal 1988). There was some local organisation on the grounds of Irish cultural and social ties, for example when Irish people established a centre in Liverpool city centre in the 1960s as a place for Irish people to meet, promote Irish business and “lift the image of the Irish in Liverpool” (Shennan 2015: np). However, in the light of on-going national concerns about tensions in Northern Ireland, Irish
community organisations were banned from organising public marches in the city until the 1990s (CNH 2013).

The 1990s saw a shift in the reconfigurations of Irishness in the city. While race and the ‘multi-ethnic’ riots of 1981 continue to structure narratives of urban regeneration, accounts of violence associated with Irishness have faded away. As is the case elsewhere in the UK and the US, people of Irish identity merged into a Celtic ‘white’ category (Onkey 2011). In recent years, celebrating Irish immigration has become an ‘ordinary’ part of Liverpool’s identity and repositioning. In 1997, as Tony Blair worked towards the Northern Ireland Peace Process, Liverpool leaders established a city-twinning programme with Dublin. Since 2002, an annual Liverpool Irish Arts Festival has been developed in partnership with the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, other city-centre cultural institutions and the Liverpool Community Irish Centre. On the city tourist and marketing websites, Irishness, (associated with pub culture and music), is one of the few transnational identities that serves as an ‘ethnic backdrop’ for leisure-based city marketing (McSweeney 2011). More than one interviewee described the city as an ‘Irish’ place.

An ‘ordinary’ Irish community centre and the Liverpool Irish Arts Festival

My impressions of St Michael’s Irish Centre were of an ‘ordinary’ social club, similar to many others embedded in neighbourhoods around the city. On the walls, noticeboards announced play schemes, jumble sales, social events and welfare rights services; the smell of beer lingered from the previous evening. It seemed a long way from the city centre ‘middle class’ Irish arts festival.

The one full-time member of staff told me that the cultural programming of the Irish arts festival was of little interest to many of her members and on the peripheries of her day-to-day work. Like the staff and volunteers running youth services, this centre manager struggled to deal with the daily tasks of fund-raising to keep the building open. Cultural and social events had an important place in the association, with events such as ceilidhs, and institutions such as the bar, structuring social relations. But much of the activity of the association focused on supporting the older Irish immigrants (some Gaelic speaking), who had come over from Ireland after the Second World War to help reconstruct the city of Liverpool (as had the Spanish, Portuguese and Algerian workers in Marseilles). Reflecting the ways in which multi-scalar trajectories affect urban place-
making, part of the activities of the centre were funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, to assist in the provision of welfare advice and social activities to recently-arrived Irish citizens, including international students and economic migrants who had left Ireland in the wake of the post-2008 economic downturn. According to other associations providing support to people of Irish origin in Liverpool, isolation and mental health are major issues for people of Irish background, as are periodic, sectarian and racist attacks (CNH 2013). In 2012, marchers were attacked by Far Right groups as they paraded through Liverpool during the marching season (CNH 2013). Experiences of cultural, social and economic marginalisation, as well as a long-history of socialist activity, meant that a number of Irish associations participated in campaigns against the detention of asylum seekers and worked with organisations supporting refugees and other ethnic minorities including Liverpudlian residents of Chinese, black African and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds.

_Tensions between one-off cultural projects and ‘ordinary’ neighbourhood activities_

A small group of young white female members of St Michael’s Irish Centre attended the training session I arranged, along with people I had recruited from a new Kensington-based Chinese association, and a longer-established Hindu cultural organisation. Once again, not one of the Irish centre members went on to join the face painting association. As a project worker attempting to develop a multicultural project I wondered why take-up for the project was so weak. Applying an ‘ethnic lens’ to understand these dynamics did not seem coherent, given the welcome the project received in youth centres, and given the involvement of staff and members of the Irish centre were involved in anti-racist campaigns. Later on, drawing on insights learned from my fieldwork in Marseilles, I came to understand non-participation not solely as influenced by a matter of taste or considerations of social or cultural difference, but also significantly influenced by structural factors of time and space.

_Structuring factors of time and space_

Both the youth and Irish associations attempted to provide an all-year-round service, creating an important form of urban sociability and structured neighbourhood social interactions (see Susser 2012; Wimmer 2004). Conversely, in current culturally-inflected urban development, there is a growing trend in the funding of one-off, short-term competitively-funded projects, run by outside organisations. These often produce
more ‘consumable’ and marketable forms of cultural practice, aiming to turn a particular urban district into a ‘stage’ for cultural performances (See Part 1). Such short-term cultural interventions adversely affect funding for the workaday, ‘ordinary’, neighbourhood-based cultural and social activities and youth work. Opportunities for ordinary, embedded sociability and locally-organised cultures of leisure and pleasure are frequently marginalised, devalued or abandoned.

Furthermore, for key members in both the youth clubs and the Irish centre, the face painting project was a useful creative activity, but it was not ‘theirs’. Membership of the Irish Centre and the youth and community centres in the Kensington area (as with the choir in Saint-Mauront) worked like a closed social group. The youth centres tended to recruit on the basis of socio-spatial relations of proximity and kinship; the Irish centre operated across the city and was set up to support a specific ethno-nationally defined community with cultural and social activities. As neighbourhood-based youth workers confirmed in informal conversations, territorial rivalries between young people from across this part of the city restricted mobility and access to social and cultural activities, particularly for young men (see also Kintrea et al. 2008). In inner-city neighbourhoods, this is ‘ordinary’ behaviour (Wimmer 2004).

As with the city centre arts festival, the multi-cultural, area-based project that I was proposing was not rooted in ‘place’ and was not owned by people who lived in the area. It originated in the institutional ‘non-neighbourhood’ space of the Job Bank, and was dependent on the wider Kensington area for funding opportunities and institutional partnerships. The next institutional framework that I consider brought together another matrix of social networks that tended to be less tightly formed and more closely linked with the national community cohesion agenda that I was promoting.

2) School policy in a changing neighbourhood
The Kensington Regeneration area included five primary schools. Before describing how these played a role in structuring neighbourhood relations, some comments are needed about the institutional framework for public education in the UK. This is required given significant shifts in national educational policy in the UK since the 1990s. This includes a growth in a neoliberal policy framework, placing increased focus on market choice in public education (Harris and Johnston 2008). In Liverpool, following Central Government policies, schools were taken out of local authority
control and encouraged to become self-managed, though they continue to be evaluated nationally through league tables. Head-teachers were also involved in decisions on urban regeneration in the Kensington area, as members of the committee of Education and Life Long Learning. All were concerned with making their schools more attractive at a time, in the face of major shifts in population (loss of numbers through housing clearances and recent increases in migrants).

Schools have become a key focus of debates on social segregation on grounds of class and ethnicity in the UK (Mansor 2014). In some ways, similar trends emerged in France, however the policy responses have been very different. In a climate of growing repressiveness in France about issues to do with immigration, Islam and insecurity, the French government banned any forms of ostensibly religious symbol such as the hijab (Akan 2009; Fassin 2013). While schools in Britain had new duties to promote the ‘community cohesion’ agenda, they were also posited as ‘community hubs’; social spaces where opportunities for relations to be constructed across presumed barriers of difference (Mansor 2014). This included opportunities for afterschool learning and involving parents within the school. Schools also had dedicated staff or volunteers responsible for promoting the involvement of ‘the community’.

Under the then New Labour administration, a ‘cultural turn’ had been introduced in education policy; schools were encouraged to increase participation in arts projects, generally justified as promoting social inclusion (Hall and Thompson 2013). 129 In this context, all the schools welcomed the free face painting training project, supported by a regeneration agency that was contributing significant amounts of money to educational institutions and projects. Teachers generally fed back that the project directly benefited children and their parents, 130 and welcomed the objectives of the project of encouraging people of different backgrounds into volunteering opportunities. This was something that I deliberately promoted when presenting the course, underlining that the training had been developed with people with English in mind, and could enable people to

129 The focus on ‘culture’ was lost following the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat administration from 2010.
130 In line with this institutional opportunity, Xena and I tailored the training sessions to meet the needs of parents, volunteers, and staff as well as the children at the school; for example putting in place a service to process criminal record checks, arranging sessions in school hours and supporting volunteering in school activities.
volunteer without the need of fluent English, language that ‘made sense’ in the institutional context of the UK public education system.

The network of social relations that came together at the school tended to be less tightly-knit than the ethno-national or neighbourhood-based associations discussed above, and approximately one or two participants per course would go on to volunteer with Rainbow Faces. Recruits from schools could be divided into two ‘groups’. There were the long-established residents, already involved in a dense web of social networks, and there were those who were less well enmeshed in neighbourhood-based associations; some of the parents had never before been involved in volunteering or school-based learning projects. Of these, a number were recent arrivals in the neighbourhood, including those seeking asylum, refugees and work-based migrants. Eddie is an example of a long-established resident, recruited through a school-based training session, who came to see the face painting project as having social and cultural value.

Eddie was an unassuming, white British woman in her early fifties, who lived with her husband, a security guard, and her teenage daughter, in a small, semi-detached house, on an estate of social housing built in the 1980s. Eddie was reticent and would probably not have put herself forward for the face painting course had it not been for the deputy head teacher, who encouraged her, and other parents, to participate in this and other community activities. When I met Eddie she was paid as a part-time playground assistant and volunteered as a face painter at school events, when her two children attended face painting sessions there. She continued to do this after they moved to senior school. She was part of the networks of kinship and friendship that were both local and also dispersed across the city.

She was not initially interested in becoming a member of the association; over time the face painting project began to have cultural, social and economic value for her. Thus, when it did not clash with her many other duties as a committed member of the local Catholic church, (duties which included visiting elderly or infirm parishioners, delivering food parcels at Christmas, and preparing the church for services), or if she was not called upon to help as care-giver for her disabled sister-in-law and mother-in-law, who lived across the road, or needing to prepare the evening meal for her husband and daughter, or to spend time with other members of her family dotted around the city;
if it did not clash with her attending weekly Weight Watchers sessions in a
neighbouring district, or interfere with her role as playground assistant and principal
face painter at the increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse local Catholic primary
school, Eddie would participate in as many face painting training or volunteering face
painting sessions that were organised by Xena and myself as she had time to do. She
encouraged her daughter to join too.

3) Religious organisations

The Catholic church was a very important social institution for Eddie. As I saw in
Marseille, religious institutions were involved in mediating social relations in the face
of broader political and economic transformations in this part of the city. In some ways,
religious organisations were legitimising state-led urban development. The Kensington
Regeneration programme was chaired firstly by the bishop of Liverpool and then by a
local Anglican vicar. Certain interventions by religious leaders reflected dominant
narratives of top-down social cohesion and integration. Local church leaders presented -
and defended - the work that Pete and I were doing, particularly the face painting and
festivals, as the “the glue that bound together the bricks” of the different ethnic groups
in the neighbourhood.

In 2000, members of churches and other charitable organisations from within and
beyond the Kensington area, came together to put in place welfare and social support
mechanisms to assist people seeking asylum, who had been housed in the Kensington
area. This led to the creation of a charity that financed the accommodation and
refreshments for the destitute women in the Catholic church where I lived whilst in the
field. Churches across the neighbourhood were also offering an increasingly crucial
social safety net for impoverished people of all backgrounds, through the provision of
food banks and soup kitchens. This has become vital as real incomes for the poorest part
of the population continue to fall, the cost of living rises, and state support for the
poorest is cut (Skeggs 2015). Some churches ran free English language classes,
regardless of the attendee’s immigration status, organised neighbourly social events, and
provided volunteer opportunities for people excluded from the labour market because of
immigration status. As I saw when Lilly, Amala and I helped out at the free lunch that
was provided each Sunday at the Catholic church, these were occasions where social
relations could develop across different backgrounds.
The availability of church halls played a vital role in the life of the neighbourhood, providing (increasingly rare) cheap or free venues for people wanting to organise cultural or social programmes, organise cultural, social or sporting activities such as Alcoholics Anonymous, majorettes, weight-loss groups, as well as providing meeting spaces for local civic groups building various forms of local organisation and protest.

Changes in the congregation and the denominations of religious buildings offer a way to follow the shifts in make-up of the population. For a number of years, a former Welsh Presbyterian church has served as a Hindu temple for the wider city-region. In the last ten years, three abandoned church buildings have been taken over by francophone African churches. Church leaders from two churches in the area offered their buildings to other denominations, such as the Ethiopian Christian community. The profile of local parishioners was also changing. People from Kerala in South India, the Gambia, Zimbabwe and Poland attended Sunday Mass at the Catholic church where I was staying, and organised ‘multicultural events’ (in this case in the Liverpool Irish Community Centre) in a desire to develop relationships with parishioners and share in ‘their culture’.

I promoted the face painting training to people involved in some of these religious institutions. Some older white women from churches in Kensington and other parishes across the city attended the courses, as they saw it as a useful resource for their congregation; but they did not volunteer with the project. A couple of members of the large francophone African churches in Kensington also participated. As with the Irish association, for many their interest was not the face painting group per se, but how the skills that they learned could complement their involvement in other religious and ethno-national networks, which for many had a greater importance in their daily lives, particularly given social and economic exclusion from mainstream urban structures because of immigration regimes, language barriers, and experiences of racism.

4) “Diversity database”

Influenced by Pete’s open and non-bureaucratic attitude (allowing members of the public into the offices after hours etc.), I tended to treat the face painting training as a ‘common good’ and would invite anybody who seemed interested to attend. Nonetheless, I focused on people whom I had met and included on my “Diversity Database”, specifically ‘targeting’ people on the basis of identified ethnic, national or
religious difference. This included long-term residents of Kensington from Hong Kong and the Yemen, who worked in family-run businesses (hair-dressing and family convenience stores), post-graduate students from India and Iran, health care professionals from Africa and the Caribbean, recruited to work in the National Health Service (NHS), people claiming asylum or who had refugee status from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, along with three white teenage girls, who lived outside the Kensington area in a suburban ward of Liverpool and wished to learn face painting as part of their personal development.

The spatial spread of people’s social networks affected participation. For some trainees, the main focus of their everyday life was not on ‘the neighbourhood.’ This was the case for Faridah. Faridah became involved in the face painting sessions because of a friendship that Pete had developed with her father, who managed one of the Yemeni-run newsagents in Kensington (see Part 2). She was one of twelve children, her siblings spread out between Liverpool 7 and 8 and the Yemen. Much of Faridah’s social activity took place in institutional education and training centres in Liverpool 8, where there was a concentration of young people of Yemeni and Somali background, the major mosque in the city, and most of the ethnic and religious associations providing services to people of black or minority ethnic backgrounds. She was a member of Arabic neighbourhood and cultural associations in Liverpool 8, which linked into city centre cultural institutions, via the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival.

When Faridah attended Making Faces United events - which she would do irregularly, if I followed up emails and letters with phone calls and texts - she would interact with Xena and me, but she tended to be reserved with other members. In part, this was to do with her personal capacity for sociability, but equally it reflected how incorporation was affected by the dominant informal, and sometimes raucous, humour of some members of the group, that did not meet everyone’s taste. Significant numbers of recent migrants recruited to the project had higher educational background and different class-inflected aspirations and cultural values. This affected their long-term involvement in what could seem a ‘working class’ project. As happened with the choir in Saint-Mauront, participation was inflected by class and distinct understandings of value.
5) Neighbourhood and residents associations

This was broadly different to the socio-spatial focus of face painters who were involved in neighbourhood and residents associations. The network of residents associations was a key resource for much of the communication and outreach work of Kensington Regeneration, as well as for other service providers, such as social landlords and police (similar to the welfare rights association in Saint-Mauront). Almost exclusively, these were made up of long-established, almost exclusively white, British residents of lower socio-economic status. Activities were funded by small income-generating schemes such as tombolas and raffles. Small funds were available on application from social landlords, the municipality and Kensington Regeneration, as part of the policies towards the ‘capacity-building’ and professionalisation of the voluntary and community sector. Members of residents’ associations were also involved in neighbourhood forums, organised by municipal workers or social landlords to discuss and critique proposed urban regeneration interventions and other neighbourhood matters. Activities of these associations used to focus on organising street parties, or trips away for young people or older residents, who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

At this point I want to introduce Liz, who was initially informed about the face painting training by the chair of her tenants and residents’ association, of which she was a committee member. She was encouraged to attend the course because a member of the committee who could face paint was leaving the area, and they appreciated that this was a useful skill for raising money during their street festivals, and provided pleasure for local children. As well as using the face painting skill in her personal networks, she would go on to become the most active and committed member of Rainbow Faces; she also encouraged her three daughters to attend the training and volunteering events.

Like the majority of members, she was a white British woman who had been born and brought up in Liverpool. She lived with her white British partner and three daughters, a ten-minute walk away from Eddie.

Housing policy and social relations

Liz rented her house located in a street of 19th century terraces from a private landlord. It is of note that during the lifespan of the project, Liz and her family were threatened with losing their home, as their landlord had placed the house on the market at a time when there was a flurry of interest in the housing market in Kensington. The huge
housing clearance programme had been introduced in the early 2000s because the area was deemed an area of market-failure. I met estate agents in 2004 who told me how investors in London and Dublin had bought whole streets of housing over the telephone, in what was informally called the ‘Liverpool 08 effect’ as there was a sudden surge in house prices in the city after Liverpool was selected as Capital of Culture in 2003. Demand was also affected by the area’s designated status as a regeneration zone, rising numbers of international students and the fact that Central Government had created a new niche in renting accommodation to accommodate asylum seekers. In short, similarly to Josephine’s position in Saint-Mauront, multi-scalar processes, including culturally-inflected development risked uprooting Liz and her family.

_Cultural activities, employment and time_

Liz and Eddie, both long-term residents of Kensington, knew each other before joining the project, however, they did not socialise together, partly because of different values and ways of socialising. For example, Eddie preferred to interact in a private social space, without drawing attention to herself. She valued modest behaviour and quiet manners (like Sylvie and Samia in Marseilles). Liz, by contrast, was loud, not afraid of being ‘mouthy’, and would socialise on her doorstep, in the local pub and in the street. She often carried out conversations and noisy, sometimes violent, disputes with family members and neighbours, in the street.

From a ‘state’s eye’ view, Liz might be considered the epitome of ‘Broken Britain’ (Tyler 2015). Like many other members of the face painting project living in an area, where over 30 percent of the population received social security payments for sickness, unemployment, or were on income support, neither Liz, her partner, nor her eldest daughter, were involved in the formal labour market. Liz suffered from mental health issues and was in receipt of long term sickness payments. Her youngest daughter, also a member of the face painting project, had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and had temporarily been excluded from school for knocking down a boy two years older than herself; a story that Liz recounted with a certain pride and amusement. Liz could be presented as the personification of

131 Unemployment rates would rise during the time I was in the field, as the impact of the recession hit. In 2012, the Kensington and Fairfield ward had the 4th highest worklessness rate of all Liverpool wards (LCC 2012).
Liverpool’s “sick communities”, held up as a hindrance to Liverpool’s plans to be repositioned as a 21st century European city.

I knew from conversations with older residents, that former generations of people living in Liz’s street were employed just across the road, in Plessey’s, a large factory complex, and the hub of the national and international telecommunications industries. At its peak in the 1960s and 70s, over 10,000 people were employed there. When production ground to a halt, the Plessey factory complex and site was refurbished as desk-space for ‘knowledge-intensive businesses’; as part of efforts to change the economy of the city and alter the aesthetics of this central axis into the city centre. Few new employment opportunities had been created for people living in the area under recent urban regeneration programmes. As far as the work on offer was concerned, Liz, like many others, had carried out a cost-benefit analysis about the value of moving off the social security payments system and finding formal employment. She concluded that it was “not worth it”, when the financial costs of doing this were taken into account.

Liz was a tremendously hard and creative worker, however. As well as making tutus, which she sold via a local dance shop, she regularly caught the bus to spend long hours cleaning newly-built houses, constructed under different urban regeneration schemes in the north of the city. For this, she was paid cash-in-hand (“doing a foreigner”, as I heard it called in Liverpool, meaning working in the informal economy, ‘on the side’, usually for cash in hand). In a similar way, I saw how, while excluded from the formal economy on the basis of immigration status, women I lived alongside worked in the informal economy, and three were involved in volunteering activities as a means to generate small amounts of money. For example Lilly, a Zimbabwean grandmother seeking asylum, regularly crossed the city on public transport to look after the child of a nurse who could not afford formal childcare. Equally Amala, a Tibetan woman seeking

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133 The firms ATM Company, AT&E (Automatic Telephone & Electric), Plessey, GPT and Marconi were variously based on the site between 1903 to 2006 http://www.plesseyattheedge.co.uk/why.html
134 A blogger writing about Liverpool has suggested that the term’s origins might relate to a practice carried out by Liverpool slave traders after the abolition of slavery act, where they would register their ships abroad, and carry slaves for other countries. If this is the case, the term links the informal and sometimes demonised informal work, that is part of everyday getting by in impoverished neighbourhoods in 2012, with the ‘innovative’ practices of the Liverpool merchant sailors, praised in many of the official accounts of 18th century Liverpool. Hughes, R. 2013, It’s Liverpool in 1820, http://asenseofplaceblog.wordpress.com/2013/01/23/its-liverpool-in-1820. Accessed 11.07.2014.
asylum, tried hand-washing cars before cleaning on ‘volunteer wages’, for a cultural organisation that could not afford a regular cleaner. All three women were a constituent part of this city’s 21st century urban economy; although an unacknowledged one.

Far from being excluded, Liz, like many others, was embedded in a plethora of social networks; from kinship relationships, ties of neighbourliness - made and broken on front doorsteps or at the local pub -, formal involvement in her neighbourhood association, the local neighbourhood watch scheme and a range of different institutional and semi-institutional structures in her area, including housing association meetings. Prior to the face painting initiative, Liz and her family had took part in a ‘community mural’ project, run by some other cultural workers. Indeed, it was because she was not in full-time education, training or employment, and because she received social security payments, that Liz was able to participate in such publicly-funded cultural activities. It was for similar reasons to this that it is often only people who are not in full-time work, or who have childcare arrangements, who are able to take part in the many community consultations that are used to legitimise urban development processes, while at the same time these processes condemn such activities as not appropriate for the 21st century economy (Latimer and Munro 2015).

Racism and multiculturalism

Sometimes Liz and other members voiced complaints about ‘migrants’ or ‘asylum seekers’, whom she described as ‘abusing’ the welfare system and taking the resources of the ‘British people’. Liz used the language and vocabulary of racism and xenophobia that was circulating at the time in the local and national press, with the sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’ apparent across Europe (Amin 2004). As such, she could seem the embodiment of the intolerant, racist, social ‘underclass’, perpetuated and stigmatised as such in the mainstream press, and by certain members of the political classes (Tyler 2015).

Racist behaviour certainly affected social relations and opportunity structures in Liverpool. When I was living in the women’s refuge, people told me stories about having faced physical and verbal violence. More than one told me about having experienced stones thrown through windows of accommodation known to house asylum seekers. Another, a woman from Zimbabwe, recounted an experience in a bus, when a man had stood up and berated the “asylum seekers”.

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It is imperative to acknowledge how local racialised practices, influenced by a radicalisation of discourse against immigration across Europe, affected the possibilities of individuals and groups to move around the city. It is also important to describe how people could voice complaints in terms of racial stereotyping, while forming relationships on the basis of commonalities - not across difference but regardless of difference. For example, Liz might critique ‘multicultural policies’ and blame social ills on ‘migrants’, yet she went on to develop friendships and affinity with people according to criteria that were not based on ethnic difference, such as people who liked “having a laugh”, or people whom she judged could show a real commitment to the neighbourhood.

One instance of the latter was Liz’s relationship with Joy, a black woman from the Caribbean, who had come to the UK as part of the local NHS’s recruitment of migrant labour, to fill vacant positions in the UK. Her incorporation into Kensington was influenced by her previous involvement as a member of a nursing union in the Caribbean, social isolation and an interest in politics. Joy contacted me after she had received a flyer concerning a Kensington Regeneration BME housing consultation exercise. As I chatted to her on the phone, I learned that she rented a small terraced house to the north of the Kensington area and was looking for ways to take part in her local area. I invited her to the face painting training. She went on to become a key member, involved in the organisation of meetings and fundraising. Because of contacts developed during the project, Joy was recruited onto a Positive Action Programme to increase BME representation within the Council. She went on to become a local Councillor in the city.

Despite differences in education, social status and aspirations, a close friendship developed between Joy and Liz, and subsequently Liz’s family, with Joy invited to family baptisms, funerals and street parties. Such relationships were not common, but nor were they unique. Liz struck up numbers of relationships with men and women of visible migrant backgrounds that she met through the face painting project and other networks of networks. I saw similar relationships develop between people seeking asylum, parishioners of various churches, and neighbours. In Liz and Joy’s case, the link had been facilitated by the resources and institutional framework provided by an urban regeneration programme, but the relationship grew beyond the institutional space of Rainbow Faces and proved long-lasting and meaningful.
As described in Part 2, Liz challenged the dominant focus on multiculturalism, which she experienced as marginalising ‘English’ culture. Yet, for some people, this focus was meaningful. This was the case with Mary, a long-term resident in the Kensington area. She had had moved to Liverpool from Hong-Kong, to marry a Chinese man, with a British passport, whom she divorced after a number of years working with him in a ‘Chinese chip shop’. I came into contact with Mary through networks developed when attempting to initiate ‘Chinese’ events for the Kensington cultural calendar. When I met her, she and her two children lived in social housing in the Kensington area. While she had established relations with white British neighbours, she socialised predominately within Hong-Kong Chinese social and economic networks, because she was reticent about her limited English and because of her experience and fear of racial abuse. For her, the multicultural projects developed by Kensington Regeneration were an opportunity to try change the behaviour of young people, who would taunt her, and her children, in the street.

Mary was not an active member of Rainbow Faces, but through it she developed some of her first friendships with what she described as ‘English’ people. She went on to develop a hairdressing business in the city centre, serving the new market created by the massive recruitment of Mainland Chinese students. Running the business would take precedence over her involvement in ‘community projects’. Nevertheless, each year she volunteered when the face painting team painted at the Chinese New Year celebrations in the city centre.

**Gender patterning**

As with the choir in Marseilles, gender clearly structured participation. Most of the recruits were mothers with children in local primary schools, or young women who joined after family members had experienced the training. Two fathers also joined the training, as did another young man who had seen the group face painting at an event. Similar to the choir members in Marseilles, many of the women who participated in the face painting project had a limited educational experience and participation seemed to be structured by gendered opportunities within the formal economy. Most of the long-term residents either worked in low-paid employment and/or insecure work or were on social security benefits. Equally, corroborating observations alongside choir members in Marseilles, the face painting project speaks of the important role that many women play
in forging spaces of lived, everyday cohesion. Participation in these cultural projects was partly informed by their incorporation within other networks where they acted to maintain, and improve, everyday life.

**Face painting as a multi-dimensional activity**

Somewhat differently to the aesthetically-focused cultural interventions of T.Public and Art de Vivre, there were a number of different modes of incorporation within the Rainbow Faces cultural initiative. Members could take part in training sessions, volunteer as face painters at events and organise and participate in social activities and meetings. These diverse aspects emerged through the intersection of the culturally-inflected policy and the community cohesion agenda, alongside broader ideologies promoting community development and volunteering. The ways in which these different threads were spun together, in relation to interactions between the cultural workers and ‘participants’, contributed to the project’s transcending the original objective of promoting cultural diversity in a bounded area of Liverpool.

*The shifting culture of meetings in the Job Bank*

Influenced by Pete’s belief in the importance of developing ‘sustainable’ community groups who would be able to continue the work of Kensington Regeneration following its ending in 2010, and influenced by the rhetoric of ‘capacity building’ and community development, all trainees were invited to meetings to discuss the project from the start. The social space of the meetings became an important aspect of the project, as it allowed cultural workers and ‘participants’ of different socio-economic and ethno-national backgrounds to sit around a table together to discuss factors that touched upon the cultural and socio-spatial aims and objectives of the project.

Initially, because of my position as ‘project developer’ for Kensington Regeneration, my understandings of how meetings ‘should’ work, my access to computers and printers, and the fact that I wrote most of the funding bids meant that I had considerable influence over the agendas and direction of the meetings, and the ways in which ‘culture’ and the social objectives of the project were framed.

The institutional focus was reinforced by the setting of the earlier meetings, held at the Job Bank. As mentioned above, this building was external to the everyday social geographies for most participants. Crossing the threshold of the building required a
certain physical effort. Some people drove there for health reasons, or because of a fear of urban violence. Others walked, having to negotiate the busy junction with pushchairs and children in tow. Liz and her family took two buses each way. Lack of childcare arrangements proved a further barrier to attendance.

The ‘culture’ of meetings in this institutional space could be intimidating. As the project became instituted as an association, the business of the meetings was governed by a formal constitution and governing documents that set out the aims and objectives and determined how the business of the group be conducted. Many members were reluctant to take a position on the Management Committee, having had little experience in such roles. Language could be an issue, for those who did not speak fluent English. As I would see in other projects in Liverpool and Marseilles, the people who did step forward tended to be involved in institutions or associations, either in a professional or volunteer capacity, for example, those who had experience of the formal procedures of meetings such as Joy and Liz.

However, as a Management Committee was recruited, different members became increasingly assertive and the culture of the meetings shifted. Over time, in between informal conversations, interruptions by children of members or cigarette breaks, different members expressed their own goals for the project and perspectives on the city. Slowly, sometimes in ways that clashed with my procedural, ‘bureaucratic’ approach, these contributions inflected the development of Rainbow Faces.

I also organised training on subjects such as ‘how to run meetings’ and other ‘capacity building’ skills, in partnership with third sector support organisations in Liverpool. The possibility of participating in these more administrative activities encouraged people to join the Rainbow Faces project because they were looking to ‘improve their CV’ or develop new skills. This was the case with Khadijah. Khadija was a recent arrival in the UK, having fled Afghanistan with her husband and three young children. She had limited English and had never volunteered for an association or worked before. She joined the training because a friend she had met at the school gates, a confident woman from Somalia, had also participated in the training; and on top of this, she was also connected to me via other social networks, and we had talked about how this might be an opportunity to improve her English and develop skills that would help her to find work. For a short time she carried out some administrative tasks for Rainbow Faces in
the offices of Kensington Regeneration. She left the group when she got an opportunity to work for an association as a BME outreach worker on a domestic violence project, as result of connections made via the regeneration agency. Similarly Grace, a 15 year-old girl from the Caribbean who was introduced to the group by Joy, attended the training and helped out with meetings as part of a work experience placement. Also Anuja, a shy, middle class international student from India and an attendee of the Hindu temple, signed up to the face painting project partially because she hoped volunteering opportunities would strengthen her application to apply for a working visa in the UK.

Meetings ‘in the neighbourhood’

As the project became a voluntary association, financial support from Kensington Regeneration reduced and renting rooms in the Job Bank became prohibitively expensive. When there was funding available in the budget, rooms were rented in other localities in the Kensington area. A member who was also a volunteer at a school arranged for us to hold meetings and training sessions in a school classroom. When budgets were tight and free rooms not available, meetings were held in a local pub. Occasionally, some of the business of administration took place at members’ homes. I would go to Joy’s house to help write a funding bid, or would visit Fatima, an Iranian PhD student who had signed up as a treasurer, to help with the accounts or get cheques signed. In such ways, what had initially been a Kensington Regeneration project became embedded into other networks. Sometimes, I would meet Liz, either in her house or in a café in a low-end shopping centre in the city centre, to hand over volunteer expenses or equipment before events. I visited the same shopping centre with the women in the hostel. This was just one of the many overlaps in the social geography of people in the women’s refuge and members of the face painting project. While lacking any cultural and economic standing with the urban planners, I began to see these low-status commercial units as an important part of the alternative mapping of the city.

Valuing face painting

The creative, aesthetic dimension of the project was very important to some. Liz was perhaps the most committed student and would enthusiastically carry out the ‘homework’ that Xena set after training sessions, filling out her training folder with pride, spending time on the computer in researching new designs and forms of artistic
expression, and participating in all meetings, social and training events as well as face painting gigs.

As well as appreciating the creative activity, for Liz this was one of the only activities that could distract her when she was suffering from the depression that sometimes plagued her. While there possibly was something about face painting in particular that was valued - the fact that this was a creative activity in which participants were creators, that their creative activity involved human contact and largely produced a positive response from the person being painted - the project also created a social space in which sociability was encouraged and individuals were able to have a certain role in decision-making. A number of people found the project of value for building confidence and self-esteem, and for dealing with mental health issues or coping with experiences of domestic violence. Like many other social or cultural projects occurring across the city, participating in the face painting project was an activity that complemented existing social networks.

Participating in events was the fulcrum of Rainbow Faces. Many of the events had been organised through Xena’s and my contacts. Such events tended to be linked to official institutions, and tied in with institutional agendas working across different spatial scales. Events included all those events in the Kensington Cultural Calendar (the African Kensington Festival, the Kensington Chinese New Year event, One World Winter Warmer, the Kensington Irish Ceilidh, Diwali events), as well as events organised by city centre cultural organisations such as the Liverpool Playhouse, the National Museums Liverpool and Liverpool Culture Company and an Eid festival, organised by an Arabic cultural and community association in Liverpool 8.

Others events were organised as individual members asked for the face painting project to support a particular activity. For example, Liz arranged for the group to face paint at events that took place in the park near her house, including an Easter festival organised by a neighbourhood association and an ‘international football tournament’ organised by a Sierra Leonean man who lived in the neighbourhood. Other members requested volunteers to help out at school fairs or for particular charitable events. In 2007, members face painted at 24 events.
The value of volunteering

Rainbow Faces emerged at a time when the New Labour government was pushing volunteering in ‘the community’ as part of the community cohesion agenda. For Xena (and Pete), volunteering was encouraged because it could provide individual pleasure but also offer valuable experience for those wishing to develop the skill professionally.

Influenced by her ‘down-to-earth’ understanding of the importance of money, Xena insisted that members’ receive volunteer expenses when they attended events. In part, this policy was to ensure that participation in the cultural project was not a burden to those on tight household budgets. The small sums of £5 or £10 (with child care included) were highly valued by members, and enabled them and their family members to participate differently in the city. Some used it for transport. Others, for example Eddie, would use this money to buy credit for her mobile phone or to treat her daughter to some new clothes. In a similar way, Amala ‘volunteered’ each week with cleaning, in order to be given the volunteer expenses that she used to maintain contact with her family in India, as well as to develop new social ties.

Xena also saw the face painting project as a route to self-reliance, self-improvement and independence. In training she emphasised the benefit from both the financial rewards and increased sense of autonomy that face painting could bring. She used her two daughters as examples; they worked as face painters to pay their way through university. On occasions, Xena would invite members to work alongside her at professional events and paid them through her separate face painting business. Certain members used their training to set up their own businesses or face paint voluntarily in their social and kinship networks. In short, what had started out predominately as an elite ‘multicultural project’ had provided certain participants with a practical set of skills with a material value that could be used elsewhere in the city. This was one example of how a cultural project could be productive in economic and social, as well as cultural, terms.

Valuing face painting in relation to Liverpool 08 and beyond

The bid writers asserted that Liverpool’s ‘cultural map’ was grounded in the experiences of traditionally under-represented groups and individuals. For most members, like those in the choir, what they were doing was not art. I mentioned in Part 2 how, influenced by my class position and cultural capital, I saw the location and
purpose of the event (“in the neighbourhood, for the community” as opposed to “in the city centre”) as situated within a dominant hierarchy of cultural value. Yet, I conclude this section by noting that I did not pick up on the same antagonism to, or disparagement of, the European Capital of Culture that I had observed among members of the choir in Marseilles. This was perhaps because the group had received funding through the grassroots-funding scheme, also because through Xena and my own institutional links, members had participated in city centre events organised as part of the European Capital of Culture activities. In this, they were atypical of other people living in impoverished neighbourhoods, many of whom continued to feel marginalised from activities organised in the city centre, if they knew about them at all (Impacts08 2008).

However, as described in Part 2, dominant cultural production in the city was increasingly relegating ‘non-professional’ cultural activity to the sidelines. In the years leading up to the Capital of Culture year, people had come to Kensington Regeneration seeking contacts with migrants to participate in cultural projects. Four years later, however, when I was trying to locate an association with which to carry out some research, there was a tangible change in possibilities for participating in artistic activities in the neighbourhood. The Kensington Regeneration project had concluded and Kensington was no longer the focus of culturally-inflected urban development. Project officers promoting cultural diversity had left the city, with implications for local understandings and organisation of social and cultural practices. ‘Culture’ (in terms of aesthetics) had become a luxury in this part of the city. Attention instead had turned to the north of the city, where the major, private sector-led waterfront restructuring, Liverpool Waters, is planned.

In 2012, none of the women in the refuge knew about the European Capital of Culture project. In Kensington, the asylum charity manager told me that they “didn’t do culture any more”. Third-sector organisations struggled to deal with the deepening impact of austerity politics, as local authority budgets were slashed and funding for the arts reduced. Along with other urban dwellers, these women’s opportunities to participate in local and translocal networks were directly affected by cuts to cultural services in the city. Notably, as a result of budget cuts, neighbourhood libraries were threatened, putting at risk one of the few places where people could access free Internet and other media.
Similarities and variations

This part of the thesis has detailed some of the ways in which ordinary people took part in cultural activities in relation to the official narratives, multi-scalar structures of power and changing conditions of the city. The aim of this section has not been to ‘measure’ participation in a particular cultural project, or to identify individuals or groups that do or do not take part in ‘official’ cultural production. Such approaches frame people living in impoverished parts of the city as leading ‘a-cultural’ lives. Instead, I have tried to describe the dense mesh of social, economic, cultural and political relations and institutional networks that stretched across, and forged, local, national and transnational spatial connections that I observed when researching alongside ‘ordinary people’ in Liverpool and Marseilles. I discuss some of the theoretical implications of this in the concluding chapter.

Both analyses demonstrate the way that ‘everyday’ interactions were inflected by race, class and gender and show the significance of living in somewhere in particular for how culture and social relations are conceived and experienced emerges. The creation of the Kensington New Deal for Community area and the Saint-Mauront urban sensitive zone, and the respective city centre and city repositioning initiatives, created opportunities for certain kinds of social relations and urban incorporation/city making; but not others. In both the Kensington and Saint-Mauront areas, there was institutional support for cultural activity (because of urban restructuring and national policies of managing difference) that enhanced social difference, that contrasted with the ways in which people built networks of social relations, that made urban spaces more liveable and that created cultures of leisure, pleasure and consumption.

Variations between these projects relate to different institutional frameworks for culture and social development in impoverished neighbourhoods. In Kensington, the focus on capacity-building and autonomy created opportunities for participating within city structures, while also fitting in with neoliberal agendas that aimed to ‘regenerate’ the community. In Saint-Mauront, notions of ‘French culture’ and the sense of Marseilles’ and Saint-Mauront’s downscale position in the world saw some urban dwellers defending market-driven urban development, that displaced and devalued people living in impoverished urban areas.
Both projects also draw out tensions between hegemonic organisation of social relations and ‘ordinary’ interactions in ‘everyday space’; they illustrate how these frictions were moulded by national and local political ideologies and institutional frameworks performed by particular cultural policies and cultural workers. I experienced this moving around Saint-Mauront with the members of the choir. In the choir, frictions emerged between French republican notions of culture, and ‘alternative’ art forms that sought to objectify popular culture, between nostalgia for ‘tradition’ and desire for spaces that provide ‘everyday’ forms of relaxation. As a face painter, I experienced distinctive grading of cultural values as I moved around the city and challenges to dominant understandings of the need to promote community cohesion and the ‘multicultural agenda’. I explore this more in the concluding section.

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The central questions of this thesis can be summarised as follows: what similarities and differences can be observed in the ways in which ‘culture’ and social relations were seen, talked about and lived in two ‘downscale’ European cities? And: how do contemporary processes of culturally-inflected (neoliberal) urban development affect possibilities for urban dwellers in impoverished urban neighbourhoods to be included - or not - within city and culture-making structures? The European Capital of Culture programme served as a window to explore these queries comparatively. It offered a frame to consider how city-making processes are constituted in relation to notions of ‘culture’, ‘cultural diversity’ and models of ‘neoliberal urban development’ circulating within local, national, European and globe-spanning networks of power.

In many ways, and seen from a particular - policy - perspective, the story told here is well-known. Despite national and local differences in cultural and urban policy, the implementation of the European Capital of Culture project resonated with patterns of neoliberal policymaking around the world. In both cities, notwithstanding their low-scale cultural reputations, funding for elite, city centre cultural institutions and performances became increasingly interwoven into neoliberal, ‘entrepreneurial’ urban regeneration policy. Despite slowdowns in the property and financial market, city leaders continue to focus on property-led development and encourage tourist-focused cultural consumption, often involving poorly-paid cultural workers to embellish these processes. In the impoverished neighbourhoods targeted for culturally-inflected urban development, the material or symbolic benefits of urban development often seem intangible. I showed how market-led growth strategies were intimately related to marginalisation processes that contributed to the displacement and devaluation of impoverished and racialised individuals and groups from dominant place-making and marketing processes.

While similar processes have been described elsewhere, this thesis makes a contribution to such debates through the deployment of a comparative, multi-perspectival imaginary. Further, attention to scalar dynamics enabled me to tease out and nuance the multiplicity of cultural and socio-spatial values and practices in cities. This was done in the following ways:
1. I situated the ways in which elite urban decision-makers appropriated, negotiated or rejected ‘European’ ideas of how cities - and urban dwellers - should be governed and represented in time and space. This brought into relief similarities and variations in the mechanisms by which dominant ideologies concerning culturally-inflected urban development came to ground.

2. I compared and contrasted the extent to which ‘cultural work’ and ‘cultural workers’ were shaped by dominant narratives and practices circulating in multiscalar fields. This enabled me to examine how, when and where cultural workers were agents, involved in implementing particular forms of city-making processes, contributing towards new forms of inequality and exclusion, and when they challenged hegemonic ideas that ‘other’, devalue or displace particular urban dwellers and urban culture/s.

3. I studied how urban dwellers in impoverished neighbourhoods - those individuals and groups targeted by certain forms of culturally-inflected interventions - were differentially affected by and affected, responded to or ignored elite interventions.

By presenting these three interrelated domains side by side, I show how macro processes of restructuring, elite policy-making, official forms of cultural production, and the lives of ‘ordinary’ urban dwellers in these two cities are connected – or not. Now, revisiting the conceptual framework set out in the Introduction, I conclude by highlighting the strength of comparing the cultures of cities in time and space and relations of power when trying to theorise culturally-inflected urban development.

1. Multi-scalar comparisons of culture and diversity

Thinking about Liverpool and Marseilles in relation to powerful cities such as London and Paris highlights how the low-scale positions within political, economic, social and cultural fields of power of the former can influence representations and governance of cultural production and social diversity. Briefly put, elite forms of cultural policy in powerful cities tend to be backed up by greater amounts of public and private capital. By contrast, cities such as Liverpool and Marseilles have less access to public and private resources. Where London and Paris regularly host major international events, in Liverpool and Marseilles, events such as the European Capital of Culture are relatively rare; seen as one-off chances to change their scalar position (Evens 2011). In the context
of increasingly fierce inter-urban competition for resources, this intensifies the pressure on low-scale cities to succeed at all costs, with implications for urban governance.

Given this burden, the competency of local leadership was questioned, and decision-making powers shifted from democratically-elected leaders into the hands of ‘experts’ and ‘professionals’ from outside the city. However, situating this story in place, these processes are shown to be more complicated. Part 1 showed how cultural production continued to be strongly informed by ‘Parisian’ values of ‘universal’ artistic excellence in Marseilles. In contrast, a sense of the city’s working class, ‘non-elitist’ ideologies and a pragmatic focus on tourism, modulated the value accorded to ‘international’ ‘high-art’, and greater place was accorded to ‘popular’ crowd-pleasing spectacles in Liverpool.

Comparing cosmopolitanism

The concept of cosmopolitanism works particularly well for drawing out resonances and differences in the understandings and management of social difference in the two cities. ‘Cosmopolitanism’ is a concept often associated with neoliberal place-marketing, cultural consumption and gentrification (Binnie and Skeggs 2004). The concept was deployed in both cities as part of their bids to become European Capital of Culture. At that time, stories of the city’s inherent cosmopolitanism - and the presence of bodies marked as different –briefly served to represent Liverpool and Marseilles as exemplars of social integration at a time of rising tide of xenophobia across Europe. However, outside of ‘European’ circles, cosmopolitanism no longer functioned as a normative concept, but was associated with - heavily racialised - understandings of social difference and low-scale, ‘ordinary’ cultural value.

Understandings and representations of cosmopolitanism in Liverpool and Marseilles need to be understood in relation to particular legacies of colonialism and de-colonialisation, nation-state building and patterns of transnational migration. These continue to shape understandings and experiences of socio-spatial relations and of culture in 21st century both locations. The value accorded to these city’s racialised and class-inflected cosmopolitanism was short-lived because it did not ‘fit’ in with wider repositioning strategies. In Liverpool’s case, narratives adopted during the European Capital of Culture bid that acknowledge the presence of people of different backgrounds in the city were rejected, influenced both by historic marginalisation of racialised
populations and because the city was considered ‘not diverse enough’. In the case of Marseilles, while narratives of cultural diversity emerged earlier, they were inflected with locally-embedded racism, France’s colonial history and pressure to align urban narratives with an EU foreign policy structured around a binary of ‘European/non-European’. In this French city, the dominant view was that there was ‘too much’ diversity, and the ‘wrong kind’ (or ‘wrong class’) of cosmopolitanism, affecting ambitions for Marseilles to considered in the top table of European metropolis.

Again, it is useful to refer here to upscale cities such as London, Paris or New York. Urban elites regularly deploy narratives that promote their city’s diversity as markers of ‘global city’ status (Sassen 2000). While not denying that similar processes of displacement and dispossession of visible minorities and impoverished people do occur in these cities, I suggest that increased importance given diversity within urban place-marketing strategies can give a greater sense of being part of the urban fabric and create greater opportunities for participating in city-making processes (see Salzbrunn 2011).

2. Comparing within and across urban spaces

This thesis points to the importance of thinking comparatively and relationally when exploring within and across the multiplicity of urban spaces, both in and across time. Further, using marginal, ‘downscale’ urban spaces/places such as Kensington and Saint-Mauront as entry points enabled me to nuance the complex ways in which sometimes competing narratives and experiences of cultural value and social relations emerged in - and shaped - different parts of Liverpool and Marseilles. While downscale, both Kensington and St Mauront had recently been incorporated - and reimagined - as part of broader urban repositioning strategies. Thus, my fieldwork enabled me to illustrate some of the mechanisms and overlapping, power-inflected processes through which urban spaces become imagined, represented and experienced as places.

When I started working in the Kensington area, its identity was shifting - for many - from that of a white working class inner-city neighbourhood to a multicultural gateway to the Capital of Culture. Historically exogenous to Liverpool, a flush of ‘multicultural projects’ emerged piecemeal in the 1990s and 2000s, linked to UK and European frames for managing diversity as part of urban revitalisation programmes, as well as the class-backgrounds and cultural capital of cultural workers. However, as national urban
regeneration money reduced, and private investment in the city focused on area along the docks to the north of the city, the Kensington area was no longer central to urban repositioning strategies. A change in the Central Government reduced the emphasis on culture and urban regeneration at the national level. Significantly, in 2012, when I was looking for a cultural project alongside which to carry out research around in the Kensington area, associations told me they didn’t ‘do’ culture any more.

In the quartiers of Saint-Mauront and the La Belle de Mai, the attention on culture had a longer heritage, associated with (racialised) national cohesion as a social development tool from the late 1980s. The culturalisation of urban development was also affected by the neighbourhood’s relative proximity to the long-term nationally-funded waterfront restructuring project of Euromed. Together, these dynamics resulted in a dense ecosystem of arts and cultural organisations, and a greater presence of elite cultural workers living in this economically impoverished, ethnically diverse area. Saint-Mauront’s relative location within the city continues to be linked to plans to restructure the city centre. Support for major cultural institutions that can appeal to audiences beyond the ‘local’ neighbourhood continue to be linked to projects of state-led gentrification, resulting in on-going displacement and devaluation of existing urban dwellers.

Given the differences in national traditions for managing cultural and social difference it is important to stress that, during the time of my research, neighbourhood managers working in Saint-Mauront and Kensington were instrumental in introducing and/or nuancing frameworks whereby ‘culture’ both in terms of artistic excellence and in terms of claims of collective distinction based on customs, behaviours, nationality, norms and religion were used as part of social inclusion and social cohesion policies. In both cities, in different ways, neighbourhood-level officers were often critical about the elite, city centre trends of culturally-inflected development. Pete in Liverpool and some of the middle-class CUCS managers in Marseilles can be considered examples of neighbourhood workers operating under subordinate value systems. At different times, they ‘jump scale’ drawing upon national and European-level ideas of multiculturalism, introducing new frameworks for managing social relations and social difference.

However, these cultural workers had little institutional support at the city-level and were funded on a short-term area-based ‘project-by-project’ basis. In Kensington, ‘culture’
became a luxury that could no longer supported under the austerity regime; in Saint-Mauront, culture was tightly linked to city-centre gentrification strategies, inflected by the nationalist turn in French cultural policy (Ingram 1998).

3. The producers and targets of cultural policy

Common to both cities was the way in which a growing ‘professionalisation’ of cultural production, part of broader neoliberal trends, increased the influence of an institutionalised bureaucratic gaze. As shown in Part 2, notwithstanding different national and local frameworks for managing culture, cultural workers functioned as new agents for managing social difference and social inclusion. Strong similarities emerged in how class, gender and race continue to structure publicly-funded cultural production in impoverished areas, positioning (white) ‘cultural workers’ in opposition to ‘a-cultural’, often racialised, urban dwellers. Cultural workers reliant on public grants in both Liverpool and Marseilles drew on official categories that classified and/or stigmatised neighbourhoods and the people who were living there, in ways that were racialised, ‘othered’ and/or inflected by essentialising categories of class.

While showing how cultural-policies in impoverished areas are inflected with relations of unequal power, the extended cases showed that structuring categories should not be seen either as fixed or as always structured by the logics of conflict and opposition. In the face painting project, the street theatre company and the community choir, it was possible to see conflict and cooperation between and within different social categories, including ‘cultural workers’ and ‘participants’, or ‘local residents’ and ‘urban decision-makers.’ Bringing a comparative imaginary to this matter drew out the question about whether in national contexts such as the UK, where the politics of race is publicly debated, and frameworks for measuring participation based on ethnic difference, the voices of those who critique racial inequality have a greater chance of being heard.

4. Values and practices of urban dwellers

This project marks an attempt to shift broaden the frame of urban studies of impoverished neighbourhoods. The point was not merely to consider how people were imagined as ‘local’ and marginalised by dominant urban transformation processes. I also explored how people living in stigmatised urban areas are involved in contemporary urban transformation; at times as agents of neoliberal agendas, at times
appropriating and contesting dominant policy narratives. This is not, in itself, theoretically ground-breaking. However in the current political climate, where certain bodies, often racialised or demonised as the ‘urban underclass’, are described as living ghettoised or segregated lives, documenting the different ways in which urban dwellers are a part of cultural, economic, social and political fields, and vital to everyday lives of others, warrants underscoring (Green et al. 2005).

The fieldwork in the Kensington area illustrated how dominant narratives and practices of place-making and culture/multiculturalism were valued by some urban dwellers. For some, the project was valued as it offered new opportunity structures to organise and take part in neighbourhood and city-wide forms of cultural production. Some – particularly, but not exclusively, those categorised and targeted as of BME background, accepted dominant narratives of state policies of multiculturalism; it was seen as a means to challenge racialised exclusion from urban processes. However, highlighting the tensions and exclusions inherent in the culturalisation of urban transformation, the study showed how others – notably people increasingly identified as ‘English’ and ‘white working class’ – contested the marginalisation and devaluation effected by the hegemonic model. Further nuancing the picture, study also showed how certain urban dwellers were developing grassroots cultural projects or contributing to everyday forms of sociability that challenged elite understandings such as the city as mono-cultural, diversity as problematic, the neighbourhood as a bounded, racialised social space, and helping to make everyday life liveable.

The case study and social network analysis in St-Mauront illustrated how certain ‘ordinary’ urban dwellers supported practices of urban transformation that contributed to the gentrification, re-imagining and rescaling of the neighbourhood, with implications for participation of racialised and impoverished individuals and groups. The study showed how notions laïcité in France structured and racialised participation in elite cultural activities. Some former choir members were critical of certain structural inequalities behind cultural work and alternative, subordinate cultural values sometimes resulted in challenges or rejection of the imposition of elite notions of artistic excellence.

It is important to emphasise that for many people I observed, participating in aesthetic activities was a meaningful and pleasurable activity in itself; as often researchers and
elites make class-based assumptions about the lack of value people of low socio-economic backgrounds accord to aesthetic practices. In Marseilles, members of the choir continued to sing together after the funding had dried up, and regularly organise play schemes for young people, bingo evenings and festivals that are an important part of the vitality and solidarity of the neighbourhood. These initiatives by ordinary urban dwellers and cultural workers to make cities more liveable occur on the margins of elite-led culturally-inflected development. Nevertheless, such practices need to be foregrounded and theorised as they can help to identify possible alternatives to dominant, regressive models of neoliberal transformation.

By intertwining and contextualising observations of “ordinary experience of contact, cooperation, and conflict across the supposedly impermeable boundaries of race, culture, identity, and ethnicity” (Gilroy 2004: viii), with variations and similarities in the structural organisation of social difference, this research helps to develop an interpretive framework within which to analyse cultural diversity, inequality and urban change in Europe. It offers an alternative to narratives of failed multiculturalism, clashes of civilisations and growth in assimilation, through describing both racialised oppression, displacement and devaluation as well as ‘banal’, ‘ordinary’ forms of multicultural practices.

5. Understanding culture in a changing Europe, continued…

I introduced this study with an overview of how cultural policy was being talked about within in European circles and contextualised in relation to new boundaries and rhetoric of exclusion emerging across Europe. In 2010, the European Commission produced a report entitled ‘The European Agenda for Culture - progress towards shared goals’ (EC 2010). Within it, ‘culture’ was not defined, but nevertheless described as a catalyst for (European) integration. As I write this closing section, the idea of shared European cultural goals and values seems overstated. In the UK, debates are heating up concerning the referendum about whether or not Britain should stay in the EU. Across Europe, nationalistic rhetoric is on the rise. Recent terrorist attacks on European soil in 2015 and 2016 and the proliferation of ‘crises’ associated with Europe (economic, political, social and cultural) are reinforcing the exclusionary and racialised optic through which social relations and ‘culture’ are seen, managed and experienced in France and the rest of Europe. Once again, the rhetoric of ‘the clash of civilisations’ is
circulating in the global media and support for right-wing parties growing across the continent.

Yet this comparative project helps nuance generalising accounts of these processes; it sheds light on the importance of relative location in the ways in which the ‘EU’ is imagined and experienced across the European continent. These case studies illustrate how the changing relative position of the cities vis-à-vis national and European structures, influenced socio-spatial understandings and concepts of culture - including that of cultural diversity.

In the meeting with which I started this thesis, the representative of the European Commission informed cultural workers that the European Parliament commissioned a report on previous European Capitals of Culture which was “very honest”. This resulted in even more onerous details of the updated ‘Decision of the European Parliament and the Council’ setting out the conditions for the European Capital of Culture from 2020-2030. Now the need to include local cultural producers, as well as marginalised and disadvantaged groups, in the planning and implementation of the programme, is given greater prominence, alongside objectives to promote EU competiveness in the global economy. In parallel, social movements across Europe are challenging exclusionary, racialising neoliberal growth-models and xenophobic nationalism. When read in relation to the fieldwork presented above, this is a reminder that culturally-inflected urban development in Europe is a multi-scalar, multi-dimensional site of contestation. These on-going struggles over the meaning of culture and over who has the power to adjudicate cultural value must remain the object of analysis. It is here that the ways in which people become marginalised, displaced and devalued – and how these processes are challenged – become visible.

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Annexes

Marseilles interviews

MI1 Interview with Vice President of welfare rights association, 25
March 2011

MI2 Interview with former General Manager of Town Planning and
Housing with the Municipality of Marseilles, and member of Un
Centre Ville Pour Tous, 25 March 2011

MI3 Interview with Interview with Director of the Maison Pour La Belle
de Mai, 29 March 2011

MI4 Interview with member of Pensons Le Matin, activist and former
employee at the Inter-ministerial Commission for Cities, 4 April
2011

MI5 Interview with policy officer from Service for Cultural Action,
Municipality of Marseilles, 5 April 2011

MI6 Interview with the President of CIQ, Committee for the Interest of
the Quartier, La Belle de Mai, 6 April 2011

MI7 Interview with the General Manager of Town Planning and
Housing with the Municipality of Marseilles Ville de Marseille, 20
April 2011

MI8 Interview with architect involved Euromed and participant of
Pensons Le Matin, 22 April 2011

MI9 Interview with former Director of La Friche La Belle de Mai and
member of Pensons Le Matin, 3 May 2011
MI10 Interview with Senior Manager, Association Marseille Provence 2013, 3 May 2011
MI11 Interview with Artistic Director of Afriki Djigui Theatri, 5 May 2011
MI12 Interview with architect involved in EUROMED II developments, 10 May 2011
MI13 Interview with Head of Department, Research, Observation and Planning, Regional Council of Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur and member of Pensons Le Matin, 11 May 2011
MI14 Interview with Artistic and Music Director of the association L’Art de Vivre, 13 May 2011
MI15 Interview with Vice President, Marseille Provence Metropole Urban Community, 17 May 2011
MI16 Interview with Director, Association for Spaces for Reading and Writing in the Mediterranean (ACELEM), 17 May 2011
MI17 Interview with the Agency for Urban Planning for the Agglomeration of Marseilles (AGAM), 18 May 2011
MI18 Interview with Manager of Urban Contract for Community Cohesion (CUCS), 3rd arrondissement, 18 May 2011
MI19 Interview with Director of the Public Interest Grouping responsible for Politique de la Ville, 18 May 2011
MI20 Interview with Vice President responsible for Culture, Departmental Council, 10 June 2011
MI21 Interview with Mayor of the 2 and 3 arrondissement and Vice President of the Departmental Council, 14 June 2011
MI22 Interview with Councillor of 2 and 3 Arrondissement, responsible for Culture and the Urban Contract for Community Cohesion (CUCS), 16 June 2011
MI23 Interview with Manager for Housing and Urban Renovation for the Prefecture of the Bouches de Rhône, 20 June 2011
MI24 Interview with Director for Cultural Development and International Relations at the Museum for European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM), 20 June 2011
MI31 Interview with member of community choir, 21 June 2011
MI26 Interview with President of AGAM, and City Councillor responsible for Metropolitan Cooperation and Town Planning, 21 June 2011
MI27 Interview with Deputy Director, Association Marseille Provence 2013, 22 June 2012
MI28 Interview with Board Member Centre Ville Pour Tous, 22 June 2011
MI29 Interview with Artistic Director Association Les Pas Perdus, 1 July
2011

MI30 Interview with Artistic Director Association T.Public, association d'idées, 1 July 2011
MI32 Interview with Director of the Association Espace Culture
MI33 Interview Policy Officer, Marseille Espérence, 22 June 2011
MI34 Interview with the Adviser for Politiques de la Ville, Minister for Culture and Communication, Regional Department for Cultural Affairs (DRAC)

Liverpool interviews

LI1 Interview with Arts Infrastructure Manager, Culture Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, 23 September 2011
LI2 Interview with Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism, Councillor for Kensington and Fairfield, 20 September 2011
LI3 Interview with Director of Merseyside ACME/Liverpool Vision, creative business support, 24 November 2011
LI4 Interview with Senior Development Manager, Liverpool Vision, 24 November 2011
LI5 Interview with Head of International and Commercial Relations, Cultural Liverpool, 10 January 2012
LI6 Interview with representative of North Liverpool Culture Committee, 16 January 2012
LI7 Interview with Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Councillor for Riverside and Labour Group Spokesperson for Safer Stronger Communities, 17 January 2012
LI8 Interview with Policy Officer at Liverpool City Council and former Impacts08 Programme Manager at University of Liverpool, 20 January 2012
LI9 Interview with Enterprise Director at Plus Dane Housing Group Limited, 2 February 2012
LI10 Interview with Director of National Museums Liverpool, 13 February 2012
LI11 Interview with Director of Hope Street Ltd. and Cultural Organisations of Liverpool (COoL), 13 February 2012
LI12 Interview with Head of Participation and Engagement at Culture Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, 13 February 2012
LI13 Interview with Coordinator of Liverpool Art and Regeneration Consortium (LARC), 16 January 2012
LI14 Interview with Priest, St Michael's church, Liverpool, 13 February 2012
LI15 Interview with Head of Visitor Economy, The Mersey Partnership, 2 February 2012
LI16 Interview with Director of Partnership and Innovation, the University of Liverpool, 2 February 2012
LI17 Interview with Member of Parliament for Liverpool Walton (Labour), former Mayor of Liverpool 2008-9
LI18 Interview with Strategic Planning Director, Peel Holdings (Management) Limited, 24 February 2012
LI19 Interview with Estates Director, Liverpool One, 24 February 2012
LI20 Interview with Director of The Black-E, 25 February 2012
LI21 Interview with Director of the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival, 25 February 2012
LI22 Interview with researcher for Liverpool IMPACT08, 15 September 2011
LI23 Interview with researcher for the Liverpool IMPACT08, University of Liverpool
LI24 Interview with cultural policy consultant and Professor of Cultural Policy and Planning at Leeds Metropolitan University, 4 December 2011
LI25 Interview with researcher for the Liverpool IMPACT08, University of Liverpool
LI26 Interview with author Liverpool’s application for the title of European Capital of Culture 2008, former ambassador of the Liverpool Culture Company, 27 February 2012
LI27 Interview with representative from Kensington Fields Cooperative, June 2012