

# **Consuming Culture: The Experience of Liverpool's Urban Tourist Landscape**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the consumption of culture through place consumers' experiences of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. In this way, two areas of research, the consumption of culture and the urban tourist experience, which have previously been treated independently, are considered in relation to each other. Relating these two areas of research also allows a reading of culture and the urban tourist 'product' from a consumer's perspective. The methodological approach is grounded in the understanding that structure and agency are interdependent features of the urban tourist landscape. As such, the production and consumption of cultural experience within this context constitute interrelated processes. Furthermore, the research design is built on the premise that residents and visitors, together defined as place consumers, both play an active role in consuming the landscape and creating this experience. The key objectives of this research are: to examine the strategic development of Liverpool's cultural and tourism infrastructure; to explore how place consumers define culture, specifically within their experience of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape; to identify the consumers of this landscape and investigate how (through which features, practices and processes) they interact with it and interpret it. The findings challenge the way in which the urban tourism experience has generally been conceptualised in the existing body of literature. Here, the complexity of that experience is highlighted in terms of place consumers' identities, motivations and practices and their dynamic interaction with elements of the tourist landscape. Liverpool's culture is defined by place consumers both in relation to institutionalised cultural activity and its role in the regeneration of the city, but also in terms of more informal characteristics of the people and their interaction with each other. The implications of these diverse definitions and uses of culture are considered. Recommendations are made as to how the cultural and tourism provision in Liverpool could be improved through combining the everyday expression of culture and tourist activity in the city. The results of the research, therefore, will be of relevance to cultural and tourism practitioners, especially in Liverpool, and also academics interested in the convergence of the consumption of culture and urban tourism.

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# **1. Introduction**

**My rationale for researching the consumption of culture within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape is related to the history of urban tourism research but also to my own biography. I will start by explaining the connections with the latter. As far as the subject matter is concerned, for a long time I have been interested in the complex process of cultural production and consumption and particularly within urban tourism settings, where the interaction of cultures takes place on so many levels. It was during my undergraduate studies that my interest in researching tourism, culture and the visitor experience developed - around the same time as my fascination with visiting museums and galleries and attending cultural events began.**

**In terms of selecting Liverpool as a case study upon which to base this thesis on, it was a city which, having been born and grown up in, I was particularly familiar with. My relationship with the city had changed as I moved away to study and then to live abroad. Returning to Liverpool within the time I was away to see family and friends, I still felt like a native but also like a tourist – the landscape was constantly changing. I felt that this transformational process that the city was undergoing impacted not only on its physical appearance, but on the way it was experienced and the associations people held of it. This represented a cultural shift which I wanted to be part of. Through researching Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, I could become more involved with the city I came from, and learn more about it but also about other people's experiences of it. Thus while this thesis is essentially about the experiences of others, I see my own experiences, interests and identity also reflected in it.**

**As far as urban tourism research is concerned, when I studied the existing literature relating to this field, it appeared to me that the full story had not yet been told. The relatively recent regeneration of many urban landscapes has turned researchers' attention to the study of urban tourism. Unfortunately, due to the multidisciplinary nature of the field of urban tourism, the existing literature appears to be divided into separate discourses of urban studies on the one hand, and tourism on the other. Thus there seems to be no conceptualisation of urban tourism per se and consequently little holistic representation of the urban tourist experience (Ashworth,1989; Selby, 2004a; Sharpley, 2000).**

In practice, also, the complexities of urban tourism are evident. The urban tourist product comprises an amalgam of tourist attractions and local public services and amenities, which are consumed by visitors and residents alike. Therefore, a crucial factor to be taken into consideration in planning urban tourist spaces is the balancing of the needs of the local community with those of the tourists (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Bramwell, 1998; Evans, 1995; Kotler and Kotler, 2000). However, in many cases this has not yet been achieved (MacCannell, 2001; Middleton, 2000). A basic problem is that tourism organisations' definitions of the consumers of tourist space are often restrictive in the sense that they focus on tourists and, therefore, preclude other place consumers such as permanent residents and students (Selby, 2004a: 14). I use the term 'place consumer' to refer to any person, regardless of their motivation, who may be using the urban landscape.

Another aspect which appears to have been given little attention is the impact of consumer culture within the context of tourism (Sharpley, 2000). Despite developments in the field of consumer studies which begin to focus on consumption as an active process of social construction, particularly within certain spatial contexts (Miles, 1998a; Miles and Paddison, 1998; Soja, 1996), the cultural and social implications of consumption have not been fully explored in relation to urban tourism. There is a clear link between culture and consumption, since consumption, like culture, "provides an arena which distinguishes one social group from another...and yet is simultaneously integrative in providing an arena within which consumers can feel they belong to something" (Miles and Paddison, 1998: 820).

This subject has been addressed, in sociological terms, by theories of the new 'leisure class' or 'service class' (Bourdieu, 1984; MacCannell, 1999; Urry, 1990; Veblen, 1979) and the "consuming paradox" (Miles, 1998a; 1998b). From a geographical perspective (Selby, 2004a: 20), also, it is suggested that "cultural capital is not only a means of personal distinction, but can also be an attribute of place" (Richards, 1996: 267). Furthermore, the frequent emphasis on 'real cultural capital' reflects the links between culture, tourism and the economy and in particular how the cultural features of places are promoted in order to attract tourism and therefore boost the economy (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998:151). However, these two fields have not been related empirically to investigate how the changing shape, uses and meanings of the urban landscape are related to the consumption and non-consumption of culture. There has been a tendency to focus on the symbolic value of culture, rather than on the situated

social experience of its consumption. Furthermore, in theoretical terms, it has been emphasised to some extent how cultural consumption can be "enabling" or "constraining" for urban residents (Miles, 1998a; 1998b). Since the recent emphasis on cultural development strategies does not necessarily ensure access to the consumption of cultural resources, it is evident that there could still be a large section of the urban population for whom the consumer experience is out of reach (Middleton, 2000: 209; Miles, 1998b: 1003). While some of the socio-economic factors responsible for this imbalance have been addressed, it is clear that other factors and ensuing issues may also exist.

From another perspective, although the literature on marketing and destination image and decision making (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom, 1996; Page, 1995: 222-8) provides an insight into consumers' perceptions, this is not really sufficient for a deeper understanding of urban consumers' experience. We need to be able to "come to terms with the complex interrelationships, both geographical and sociological, which exist in the city...by directly addressing how consumers construct their meanings on the urban map" (Miles, 1998b: 1006).

Theories of the visitor experience (Falk and Dierking, 1992), however, do provide a starting point for an exploration of consumer behaviour within spaces of consumption. The visitor has long been considered a passive consumer of tourism and leisure services. However, the affirmation that the visitor is actually a "social chameleon" (Urry, 1990: 132), adapting to changes in the social and physical environment and active in constructing his/her own experience, is beginning to modify social scientists' understanding of the relationship between the consumption of tourism and the context within which it takes place. Within this body of knowledge, the concept of embodiment, which emphasises the experiential nature of visits and the involvement of the senses, emotions and imagination (Bagnall, 1996; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 138), has gone some way to providing an understanding of place consumers' behaviour. In addition, theories of performance and performativity suggest that different groups of consumers take on different roles and may adjust their performance according to various personal, social and physical factors (Bagnall, 2003; Edensor, 2000; Sharpley, 2000). On the other hand, it is argued that tourist activity is no longer defined as a social activity separated in time and space from everyday life and that we are in fact tourists most of the time (Urry, 1990). Although these theories, especially the latter, relate to the urban

tourism context, where tourist and local social activity interact, this line of research has not been fully explored.

It can be argued then that the literature on consumption identifies the consumption process as an act of both socio-cultural identification and distinction. The research into urban tourism, on the other hand, highlights the growing infrastructure and complexities of the urban tourism industry and begins to address issues concerning the interaction of the cultural, social and environmental aspects of the urban tourism experience. However, as yet, despite the fact that urban tourism represents the foreground of cultural consumption, the implications of the place consumer's active role in the consumption process have not been explicitly related to the multi-faceted experience of the urban tourist landscape. By 'urban tourist landscape', I refer to the areas in the core of the city, where tourist activity and attractions are concentrated. The links between culture and the urban environment are very strong. Culture largely revolves around people and since there tends to be a greater concentration of people in urban areas it goes without saying that these provide prime locations for the study of culture and its consumption.

Liverpool's urban tourist landscape specifically has been chosen as a particularly suitable site for this research to be carried out. After a period of decline, Liverpool's recent investment in its cultural heritage has acted as a catalyst for the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the city. A significant part of Liverpool's regeneration strategy has been its winning bid to stand as European Capital of Culture 2008. Tourism, too, has become a significant element of the city's cultural regeneration strategy. Through these initiatives, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Culture Company - the council body responsible for the management of Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme - and The Mersey Partnership, along with other organisations, are striving to reconstruct the image of Liverpool. This research began in the run up to Liverpool's year of European Capital of Culture and has come to an end just as Liverpool's culture year has come to a close. This therefore encapsulates the dynamics of a multi-dimensional cultural environment. However, the opportunity has not before been taken to examine in depth the experience of place consumers within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape and the nature and implications of the consumption of culture in relation to it.

It is the omissions described above that led me to the topic of my thesis. In order to address these gaps in the existing research, the following aims and objectives were set out:

**Aim:**

- To investigate place consumers' experiences of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape in terms of its status as a site for the consumption of culture

**Objectives:**

- To examine the strategic development of Liverpool's cultural and tourism infrastructure
- To establish how place consumers define culture, specifically in relation to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape
- To identify the consumers of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape
- To ascertain which features of the urban tourist landscape are consumed and the activities which are related to these
- To examine how place consumers interpret the urban tourist landscape in relation to its physical and social features but also in relation to their own personal agendas and characteristics

The specific objectives of this research will allow for a more holistic approach to be adopted whereby the consumption of the urban tourist landscape is not considered in isolation, but in conjunction with its production. The research will compare and contrast reactions and responses to five different locations in order to show how culture is a social construction and how understandings of culture vary throughout space, time and social settings and groups. The production and consumption of culture is based upon the dynamics of structure and agency which are inherent in the dialogue which takes place between consumers, organisations and institutions, the physicality of the landscape, the associated intangible cultural heritage and external factors such as narratives and images that others hold of the landscape. Therefore, consultation of a variety of sources will enable an understanding of the socio-cultural and political forces which constitute underlying factors involved in the interpretation of the urban tourist landscape.

A brief synopsis of the contents of this thesis indicates more specifically how these objectives have been addressed and how this narrative will unfold. Chapter 2 explores various aspects of urban tourism theory on the one hand and of the consumption of

culture on the other. It highlights the complexity of these two areas of research and indicates the theoretical and empirical relevance of studying the urban tourism experience and the consumption of culture in conjunction with each other. Chapter 3 examines how culture and tourism are defined and represented through Liverpool's cultural and tourism strategies, relating this to other research based on culture and tourism in Liverpool. It argues that while the city's cultural strategy, in particular, is quite broad, the actual cultural and tourism offer could be more inclusive. Chapter 4 focuses on the methodological approach which has been adopted. Here the theoretical and philosophical underpinning of the thesis are discussed in relation to each other, explaining in particular how the structure-agency approach applies. Explanation of the sample, methods and analysis techniques used is also given here.

Presentation of empirical data begins in chapter 5 with findings from interviews with service providers. The themes which emerge here follow on from the issues discussed in chapter 3 and allow for a more specific examination of the policies of individual tourism and cultural service providers and their attitudes towards these and the general local government policies. In chapter 6, empirical data is presented from interviews with place consumers regarding their definitions and perceptions of culture, and their views on how the culture of Liverpool is relevant to them and other potential consumers. These views indicate the different ways in which place consumers engage with culture through Liverpool's urban tourist landscape and how they feel cultural activity and services could be improved in the city. Chapter 7, based on participant observation data, moves on to demonstrate who the consumers of this landscape are and how they interact with five different locations within it. Particular emphasis is given in this chapter to comparing the actions of visitors and residents although the performance of other social groups is also considered. There are two purposes to the next chapter. One is to present a more specific profile of the consumers of each location, based on place consumers' interview responses. The other is to indicate place consumers' motivations, thus reinforcing the relationship between their activity and the physical and social settings within which they take place. Chapter 9 elaborates on the findings of the previous chapter by demonstrating how place consumers use and interpret Liverpool's urban tourist landscape in relation to its physical and social features. Here place consumers' responses indicate that their experiences are defined by and enacted through the relationship between space, culture and power. The focus of chapter 10 is the various images and identities through which place consumers engage with culture in the urban tourist landscape. It is found that the different roles and practices which

are adopted in connection to these images and identities add to the understanding of the performative aspect of place consumers' experiences. Chapter 11 includes the last results section, which deals with the means and processes through which place consumers experience culture, emphasising the embodied nature of this experience.

While the presentation of results is contextualised with a small discussion at the end of each chapter, the main themes and discussion points are revisited in more depth in chapter 12. This final discussion enables the main findings from each of the four sources, that is, documentation, service provider interviews, participant observation and place consumer interviews, to be considered in relation to each other but also within the context of the conceptual framework of the thesis. It is here where the dialectics and discursive nature of the consumption of culture in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape become most evident. Finally, chapter 13 brings the thesis to a close by summarising the findings but also by reflecting on some retrospective considerations and some potential avenues to be explored in the future.



## **2. The Consumption of Culture and the Urban Tourist Landscape: A Theoretical Perspective**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will discuss some of the existing literature relating to the consumption of culture and urban tourism. This discussion will attempt to demonstrate why certain bodies of literature are pertinent to the questions raised in this thesis and also identify any gaps in the existing research which are to be addressed through my own research.

### **2.2 The Production and Consumption of the Urban Tourist Landscape**

Despite the growing interest in urban tourism as a field of research, it is still an area which lacks attention, especially compared to other forms of tourism (Edwards *et. al.*, 2008). More specifically, there seems to be no holistic representation of the urban tourism experience. This is possibly a result of the fact that urban tourism is an amalgam of other disciplines and therefore has not been considered as a discipline in its own right. Ashworth (1989: 33) called for a holistic approach to the study of urban tourism to be applied. However, the need to relate urban studies and tourism research to one another has not yet been completely satisfied. Both theoretically and in practice, urban tourism has been affected by social and cultural urban change on the one hand, and on the other, by the development of tourism itself. To actually understand, then, the production and consumption of urban tourism, it is important to take both elements of the urban tourism equation into consideration.

On the one hand, the development of urban tourism can be related to the radical changes which have marked the urban environment over the last few decades. After a period of decline due to de-industrialisation, particularly in Western society, former sites of production are bouncing back dynamically as places of consumption (MacCannell, 1999; Middleton, 2000; Miles and Paddison, 1998; Richards, 1996; Urry, 1990). As a result, new industries appear, not to simply provide material commodities, but to release new subjective experiences into the urban community (MacCannell, 1999: 22-23). Tourism, as an industry, is being used to boost the urban economy, and as a leisure activity, is providing new cultural experiences.

On the other hand, urban tourism has come into being as a result of the spatial and social transformation of tourism itself. Tourism was once an activity that took place

outside the confines of the city and was far removed from any other social activity. Now, however, 'tourism is no longer a differentiated set of social practices with its own and distinct rules, times and spaces' (Urry, 1994: 234, cited in Sharpley, 2000: 382). It has been weaved into the web of urban social practice through the development of niche tourism markets and the global transportation of 'mediascapes' (Appadurai, 1990). Thus tourism becomes another aspect of urban life which "promises and guides experience in advance of actual consumption" (MacCannell, 1999: 22).

Although this thesis is primarily concerned with the consumption of the urban tourist landscape, consideration of its production is also required, due to the essence of production and consumption as interrelated processes. This is an argument which will be developed further in the course of this thesis. For now though, having established the significance of studying the urban tourism experience, I will now discuss some of the key aspects of its production.

### **2.2.1 Managing and Planning Urban Tourism**

One of the innate problems of managing and planning an urban tourism destination is the fact that different groups of place consumers share the same space and often the same facilities but have different needs (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Bramwell, 1998; Evans, 1995; Kotler and Kotler, 2000). This has not been emphasised enough in studies to date, which often tend to segregate visitors and residents. Furthermore, they concentrate on the impact of tourism development for residents, rather than acknowledging residents as active consumers of the same space, albeit maybe for different reasons. The urban tourism market has been analysed using various approaches including different user groups or motives (Hall and Page, 2002:191-193; Page, 2002: 125-126). The problem with many of these, however is that the categories can be too exclusive. For example, the distinction between place consumers is more complex than tourist/resident since there are also groups like commuters who fit into neither category. Furthermore, motivation can be considered from a number of angles, for example, different characteristics of a city, facilities, activities, and so on. In addition, place consumers can have a number of motives for using an urban area. Therefore, Ashworth and Tunbridge's (2000: 131-2) conceptual framework, presented here below, while quite general, appears to be the most useful to date in categorising place consumers:

1. Intentional users from outside the city-region, who may be holiday-makers staying in the city or outside it using the city for excursions — [Tourists and in the case of these resources quite specifically heritage tourists].
2. Intentional users from inside the city-region, making use of the city's recreational and entertainment facilities or merely enjoying its historic character while engaging in other activities — [Recreating residents].
3. Incidental users from outside the city-region, which would include most business and congress visitors and those on family visits — [Non-recreating visitors].
4. Incidental users from inside the city-region, the most numerous group, being ordinary residents about their ordinary affairs — [Non-recreating residents].

A further point that needs to be emphasised is that the juxtaposition of everyday urban social reality and tourist attractions is an inherent element of the urban tourism experience. According to MacCannell (1999: 40):

A touristic attitude of respectful admiration is called forth by the finer attractions, the monuments, and a no lesser important attitude of disgust attaches itself to the uncontrolled garbage heaps, muggings, abandoned and tumbledown buildings, polluted rivers and the like.... Together, the two provide a moral stability to the modern touristic consciousness that extends beyond immediate social relationships to the structure and organization of the total society.

However, one of the intrinsic problems of urban tourism management and planning is that the tourism element can begin to take precedence over the other functions of the city, resulting in proposals to create 'tourist bubbles', for example, and plans "to remove from the 'urban bubble' any evidence of urban ills that might be disturbing to suburban visitors" (Judd and Fainstein, 1999, cited in MacCannell, 2001: 26-27). This "sanitised version of urban tourism" would have an undesirable effect on the unique value of urban spaces and the urban tourism experience (Selby, 2004a: 25). Similarly, the increasingly common transformation of the traditional shopping experience into an "all-in-one" of leisure activities, on the one hand, provides an unlimited embodied leisure experience, full of sights, sounds and smells, all under one roof, safe from the outside world. On the other hand, the development of these complexes transports the core of retail activity from the heart of the city to out-of-town locations and also results in a standardised, predictable experience, lacking in variety (Middleton, 2000; Miles, 1998). So, while tourism and urban planning can and should create a synergistic effect, it has

been suggested that urban tourism planners, viewing tourism in isolation to other industrial and residential developments, have not yet managed to maximise the potential of urban tourism initiatives (MacCannell, 2001; Middleton, 2000). In other words, there should be emphasis on quality (of the overall urban tourism product) rather than on quantity (in terms of tourists and capital investment).

Therefore, although urban tourism can be beneficial in terms of the economic, physical and social regeneration of the city, bringing capital investment, improving the physical environment, offering opportunities for employment, generating pride amongst residents and so on, this is not to say that it should be hailed a panacea for all urban ills (Selby, 2004a: 10-11). As we have seen it can create problems and as we will see the benefits do not necessarily reach all levels of users.

### **2.2.2 Place Marketing**

The marketing of a place also has its difficulties. The fragmented and intangible nature of the place product has particular implications for the marketing of destinations. On the one hand, it is inseparable from the network of multi-functional products and services of which it is composed (Page, 1995: 213). On the other hand, the coordination of the various stakeholders also presents a challenge, especially in terms of their hierarchical jurisdictions (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000: 138; Bramwell, 1998). Difficulties can arise since different organisations are often responsible for planning and development to those involved in promotional activities (Selby, 2004a: 26). Moreover, added to the fact that the destination may be marketed on different spatial scales, from local to international, the boundaries of the place product may not be the same as those of the local marketing organisation. Furthermore, individual private organisations are quite likely to adopt a different marketing strategy to the organisation involved in marketing the city as a whole, who generally adopt a "composite view" without necessarily taking into account the diverse nature of available products and services (Page, 1995: 213). Finally, the place product is multi-sold to different target markets with a diversity of needs (Page, 1995: 216; Selby, 2004a: 24). In all, the above issues amount to the problem of deciding which aspects of the place product to market and avoiding the risk of sending out inconsistent promotional messages. However, marketing does not just amount to promotion. Many strategies fail to realise the importance of product development and market research. "Place-marketing is not a quick fix to 'sell what the city has' while overlooking existing problems" (Page, 1995: 228).

## *Place Image*

Place image has been identified as a key element of place marketing (Bramwell, 1998; Page, 1995; Selby, 1994a). It has been demonstrated how branding is often used to reinforce the uniqueness of places, which are otherwise more or less interchangeable in consumers' minds (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005). It has also been argued that image forms the basis of the selection and evaluation process. As the tourism product is to a great extent intangible, image is the only means a potential consumer has of comparing and making choices about possible holiday destinations (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005).

Place image, however, is more complex than often recognised. The repositioning of the place product is therefore a long term process which involves a lot more than sending out impressive promotional messages. Subverting the rough, industrial image often associated with cities in particular can provide quite a challenge. Many image studies to date, it is argued, focus on the received images and their impact on the selection and evaluation of tourist destinations rather than considering the underlying dynamic processes of place image (Kokosalakis *et al.*, 2006). Various image agents ranging from the media and education to word-of-mouth recommendation and place marketing agencies feed into the overall image received by the consumer (Gunn, 1972). Echtner (1999) demonstrates how tourism representations comprise a three-way relationship and therefore for them to be fully understood, each of these relationships should be explored (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). The three relationships symbolise 1) the place and how it is represented by its projected image 2) the image and how the consumer perceives this image and 3) the consumption or symbolic consumption of the place by the consumer. This framework echoes Hall's (1997) argument that tourism images are embedded in a circuit of culture, which reflects and creates identities, resulting in a constant interchange of production and consumption of images.

The influence of image has also been linked to the concept of the 'circle of growth' (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). The promotion of tourism theoretically attracts visitors, which in turn encourages investment and economic development, which reinforces a positive image and so the circle continues. Thus, image campaigns can be considered a crucial component of the circuit of culture, which reflect and reinforce economic power. However, the challenge for place marketers is to be able to promote an image distinctive enough to achieve a competitive advantage. The key to this is not just producing clever slogans, but actually selling an 'experience' (Morgan *et al.*, 2002: 5).

By highlighting distinctive attributes, images are taken out of context and thus become very standardised, and promoters risk projecting an image very similar to other cities (Hughes and Allen, 2005). Nevertheless, image projection alone does not equate with successful marketing; place marketers must also ensure that the place product meets expectations. Furthermore, images tend to be tailored to the expectations of visitors (Hughes and Allen, 2005), which also presents difficulties because residents and visitors tend to have different perceptions of the same place, but also different expectations and usage of its cultural facilities (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990: 80). The 'lived culture', which is likely to embody the images most residents hold, is unlikely to be represented in promotional campaigns. Therefore, when studying promotional images, we should consider whose representation of the city is being portrayed.

### **2.2.3 Culture and the Urban Tourism Industry**

So far, it has been acknowledged that the intersections of a diversity of products, services, organisations and users that constitute urban tourism results in a rather complex industry. Urban tourism can include a number of sub-industries such as cultural and heritage tourism, sport tourism, eco tourism, the leisure industry itself and the associated ever expanding retail industry. While place marketing organisations tend to package these kinds of themed-experiences and target potentially interested markets with the aim of providing a consumer-oriented, seemingly tailor-made product, on the other hand it has the effect of compartmentalising and limiting the range of what the city has to offer. While visitors may be particularly interested in one of these, during the course of the stay, they are likely to experience more than one of these aspects of the city.

Since it is predominantly the cultural aspect of urban tourism with which this thesis is concerned, it seems appropriate here to focus more specifically on how culture features as an element of urban tourism. A particular emphasis on culture has been an approach adopted in general by the tourism industry in order to allow destinations to package their product and revive their offer (Craik, 1997: 135), since cultural tourism provides a distinct alternative to the typical beach holiday (Clarke, 2000: 30). The reasons for its popularity are numerous and appear to be related in part to the assimilation of patterns of consumption, leisure and tourism, summarised as follows:

Tourism, it is argued, fits in with trends in economic development towards service-based, consumer-oriented industries associated with the production of symbolic or cultural capital rather than material goods. The role of culture

in this process is multi-faceted: culture is simultaneously a resource, a product, an experience and an outcome. (Craik, 1997: 113)

The increased cultural element in tourism can be related to the following developments: "the commercialisation of culture and cultural products; the restructuring of cultural production into the cultural industries; greater government investment in culture accompanied by increasing demands for accountability and demonstrations of value for money; increasing cultural consumption by a wider range of people; and expanding opportunities for training in cultural production" (ibid). However, in terms of consumption, cultural tourism appeals predominantly to tourists of higher socio-economic status (ibid.: 127) and is therefore perhaps a strategy aimed at attracting tourists with more spending power (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

Nonetheless, what cultural tourism is and how it is developed by the tourism industry has caused a certain amount of controversy. Cultural tourism, it is argued, is often mistakenly perceived as the equivalent of heritage tourism (Clarke, 2000: 32; Craik, 1997: 118) or is used as a term to add weight to other niche interests with a cultural element (Craik, 1997: 118). However, a distinction needs to be made. Heritage has a specific recourse to the past and the static remains of its lives and civilisations but has little concern with social relations and cultural practice (Clarke, 2000: 32). Culture is what makes the connection between heritage and the present. In other words culture can be defined as a lived reality indicative of and uniting social practice. Culture, therefore is dynamic, and as such is difficult to conceptualise. Perhaps, then, this is why within the context of cultural tourism, culture is treated as a commodity to be packaged rather than an expression of everyday life (ibid.: 30). This of course has implications both for the tourist and local community. First of all, what is presented to tourists is only a superficial slice of the place and its culture, as opposed to the reality, which is the interaction of a multitude of cultures. This is not necessarily a major concern for the tourist, whose expectations have already been set in accordance with the culture of the contemporary tourist, which focuses more on experience than authenticity (MacCannell, 1999; Richards, 1996). However, for the local people the effect can be to deny them ownership of their own cultures, to ultimately transform the local culture (Clarke, 2000: 24; Craik, 1997: 118) and possibly even decrease the value of their cultural artefacts (Hewison, 1987).

So, while it can be argued that 'real cultural capital' can be activated in order to differentiate urban locations in the eyes of potential investors and tourists (Richards,

1996: 267; Selby, 2004a: 20), the 'serial reproduction of culture', in other words, the opposite effect is often achieved (Richards and Wilson, 2006: 1210). As a result, city centres become interchangeable as the same facilities tend to appear throughout. This phenomenon is not unique to the production and consumption of tourism and culture but applies in general to the leisure industry. It can be connected in part to pressures to compete in the global marketplace (Clarke, 2000: 24), where on the one hand culture is being used as a form of resistance, reinforcing cultural heterogeneity, while on the other cultural homogeneity occurs as the strategies and forms used are drawn from the same global culture (Appadurai, 1990: 295). However, despite the convergence of many cultural forms throughout the world, concerns that we have reached the point of a standard global culture appear unfounded. These arguments leave us with two opposing views concerning the tourism-culture relationship. On the one hand, while it is argued that tourism and culture were once considered to be poles apart, the mutual benefits at present are hard to ignore (Richards, 1996). On the other hand, it is argued that their diverse agendas will become more difficult, not easier to reconcile (Craik, 1997: 135).

Richards and Wilson (2006), however, offer an alternative to the usual tourism strategies based on 'iconic structures', 'megaevents', 'thematization' and 'heritage mining', in order to avoid serial reproduction. They propose that creative tourism, defined as: "Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken" has a number of advantages over standard cultural tourism (ibid.: 1215). Firstly, creative tourism could be more valuable since creativity is a quality relatively few people possess. Secondly, creativity can allow the development of new products in a short space of time. Thirdly, it is more sustainable since it is process-based. Fourthly, it is more mobile and finally, creativity allows for the creation of values. Further advantages are that it allows the tourist a more active role in the whole experience and possibly most important of all, it involves investment in the creative and social resources of the destination's residents, thus engaging local people in the production of the tourist experience. Creative spectacles and creative enclaves are both ways in which destinations could use and sustain their unique culture(s). However, an integrated creative tourism approach, it is argued, is more beneficial since it encourages the active participation of the tourists (ibid.:1218). Of course, this form of tourism would not necessarily appeal to everybody, but it appears to fit into current patterns of consumption and addresses some of the



problems mentioned above in connection to the traditional approach to cultural tourism development.

Therefore we can conclude that there are a number of resources an urban tourism destination can utilise to distinguish itself from competitors. However, this should involve an approach which is both sustainable, involves the preservation and cultivation of the destination's cultures and encourages greater interaction between visitors and the local population.

### **2.3 The Visitor Experience**

Earlier in this chapter, the centrality of the visitor or place consumer in the production and consumption of the experience of urban spaces and places has been suggested. Here, I would like to move away from an industry perspective to consider the role of the place consumer in more depth. For a considerable time, the delivery of tourism and leisure products was based on perceptions of those managing or marketing the product. Although a consumer-oriented approach has for some time now been applied to the marketing of tangible consumer goods, it is only in recent years that this has been adopted in the service industries and in the tourism and leisure industry in particular. It is this tendency that has resulted in the focus on the visitor perspective. The visitor has long been considered a passive consumer of tourism and leisure services. However, the affirmation that the visitor is actually a "social chameleon" (Urry, 1990: 132), adapting to changes in the environment and active in constructing his/her own experience, is beginning to modify social scientists' understanding of the relationship between the consumption of tourism and the context within which it takes place. Sheller and Urry (2004) in their work on mobilities highlight how spaces of tourism are created by various elements of the infrastructure but also by the profiles, actions, thoughts and emotions of tourists themselves:

Mobilities of people and objects, airplanes and suitcases, plants and animals, images and brands, data systems and satellites, all go into 'doing' tourism. Tourism also concerns the relational mobilizations of memories and performances, gendered and racialized bodies, emotions and atmospheres....Tourism mobilities involve complex combinations of movement and stillness, realities and fantasies, play and work. (ibid.: 1)

This view is similar to that expressed in the literature on visitor attractions, which suggests that the visitor experience consists of the interaction of the "personal, social and physical contexts" (Falk and Dierking, 1992).

In terms of the personal context, before arriving at the urban site, visitors already have some kind of agenda based on their expectations, which are generally related to the motivation for the visit, and the knowledge acquired prior to arrival. These expectations are then modified according to the visitor's personal interpretation of the site which, it is argued, is mediated by a number of factors including culture, religion, psychological state and socio-economic status (ibid.). This implies that no one experience can ever be the same. In interpreting their environment, visitors draw on and impose their personal and cultural agendas. Selby (2004 4: 192-3) demonstrates how both individual and "inter-subjective stocks of knowledge" exist, thus action is both subjectively and culturally conditioned. Bourdieu's (1997) theory of capital is particularly relevant to the understanding of the visitor experience. He argues that the functioning of the social world involves the use of economic, social and cultural capital. Cultural capital can be embodied (absorbed, in effect, by the person), objectified (in works of art and monuments) or institutionalised (through academic qualifications) (ibid.: 47-51). Social capital, on the other hand, is understood to be the available resources which are related to belonging to a particular social group. Visitors' personal and cultural identification depends on both of these since it involves the sharing of meaningful experience (Bourdieu, 1984: Edensor, 2000). However, absence of cultural or social capital does not always render cultural experiences meaningless, contrary to what Bourdieu (1984) would argue, since consumers often tend to "create their own versions of the narratives on offer" (de Certeau, 1984, cited in Silverstone, 1994: 167). Therefore place consumers' interpretation of the urban environment is based on a combination of both personal and cultural knowledge and values.

The social context within which consumption takes place is sometimes overlooked but is a crucial element of the whole experience since space is shared and therefore the visitor experience does not only depend on the profile of the individual. Apart from being a cultural activity, tourism also provides an opportunity for social interaction (Schouten, 1995; Sharpley, 2000) and the same applies to leisure activity. This interaction is a contingent experience based on the personal and cultural profiles of each participant. Especially in an urban setting, there can be a very diverse social mix. Each individual has their own agenda, but this is also shaped by that of the others (Edensor, 2000: 326-7).

Finally, although tourism and leisure consumption differs from that of hard goods since there is often no tangible element to consume, it still takes place in a physical setting

which shapes the consumption experience to a great extent (Edensor, 2000). The organisation of space and the aesthetic and sensual nature of the urban environment can all influence the behaviour of the consumer – from what activities to engage in, to the series of events, to interaction with others, to the duration of the visit and more. In sum, it can be argued that the experience of urban consumption is a dynamic one, culturally, socially, and physically formed in time and space.

Since this initial conceptualisation of the visitor experience, however, further developments have been made to suggest how place consumers interact with their urban surroundings and create meaning through the consumption (or non-consumption) of tourism and leisure spaces.

### **2.3.1 The Socio-cultural Construction of Space and Place**

Theories of the socio-cultural construction of space and place are particularly useful in creating understanding of this complex and dynamic process because they demonstrate how people play an active role in the construction of their environment and their experiences within this. Space and place are increasingly construed as socio-cultural constructions (Soja, 1996) which are almost simultaneously produced and consumed (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000: 19-23). Places “are not merely elements of a given spatial structure and determinative of human activity from outside. Rather they are themselves social, socially produced, and socially reproducing” (Urry, 1995: 66). It is true that the meaning of space is largely defined by the objects within it. However, this view limits the way in which space can be understood (ibid., 1995). Urry demonstrates how places are configured as spaces of consumption,

First, places are increasingly being restructured as centres for consumption, as providing the context within which the goods and services are compared, evaluated, purchased and used. Second, places themselves are in a sense consumed, particularly visually. Especially important in this is the provision of various kinds of consumer services for both visitors and locals. Third, places can be literally consumed; what people take to be significant about a place (industry, history, buildings, literature, environment) is over time depleted, devoured or exhausted by use. Fourth, it is possible for localities to consume one's identity so that such spaces become almost literally *all-consuming* places. (ibid.:1-2)

This latter point reminds us that landscapes can often be seen as representations of the space which surrounds us, and as such they “represent a social and cultural geography of the imagination” (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000: 20) which is inspired by the

cultural codes of its society. However, this focus on representation and image fails to encapsulate other dimensions of the socio-cultural construction of space. Lefebvre (1991:38-39) provides a fuller conceptualisation of the socio-cultural construction of space which comprises "spatial practice", "representations of space" and "representational space". In other words, space is real in its lived, experienced form but is also symbolic in that it is conceived and perceived too. The experiential nature of space is particularly relevant to this thesis and has been expressed in the literature as follows:

*Place* consists of human practise that activates at the local level of human life, going about everyday life, passing playgrounds, using streets, pubs, areas of pleasure, workplaces and so on. It is important to acknowledge these components as mutually engaged and engaging, inter-penetrated and inter-penetrating. (Crouch, 2000: 66, citing Massey, 1993).

Therefore, space becomes place through practice. It is human action and interpretation that bestow and reinforce the meaning of a place. In many cases it is actually social engagement that allows a space to function and therefore visitors to use and identify with it (Urry, 1995: 138). An empty bar or a poorly attended event seems somehow less appealing. In other cases, for example an overcrowded space, it is the social element which can discourage or at least affect engagement. However, the notion that social interaction can create meaning through shared practice and understanding has not been greatly explored (Crouch, 1999: 259).

It has been argued that space is to a great extent constructed through leisure and tourism practice, as in our leisure time we are freer to move through space (Nielsen, 1999: 277). Furthermore, much tourism and leisure activity is social in nature, practised by various social groupings (Urry, 1995:131). Some tourism researchers have indicated the pertinence of Merleau-Ponty's (1962) work on phenomenology to the experiential aspect of tourism and leisure (Li, 2000: 865; Selby, 2004a: 146-150). Merleau-Ponty indicates the primary function that perception plays in understanding and interacting with the world. Perception defines our experience and guides our actions. In experiencing the world, Merleau-Ponty argues, the human body is inseparable from its physical surroundings and is therefore located somewhere between objectivity and subjectivity. This argument reminds us of the agency of place consumers (a more detailed discussion of the principles of structure and agency will follow in the following chapter on methodology) in creating their experience and the dialectical nature of the production and consumption of the space within which it takes place. Ryan (2000),

however, advocates the use of a phenomenographic approach to the conceptualisation of the visitor experience. This kind of philosophical perspective allows an insight not only into what people perceive but the ways in which they perceive.

So, it should be highlighted that space and representations of space are by no means static. Temporal factors which affect consumption of space along with the ongoing (re)creation and (re)interpretation of space, brought about by constant negotiations between the various producers and consumers of the urban landscape in particular, contribute to its dynamic nature. Therefore, we need to be able to "come to terms with the complex interrelationships, both geographical and sociological, which exist in the city...by directly addressing how consumers construct their meanings on the urban map" (Miles, 1998b: 1006).

### **2.3.2 Performance and Performativity**

In order to consider in more specific terms the ways in which space is practised, it is useful to turn to the body of literature relating to performance and performativity. The definition of these terms is often unclear because they have been applied in a number of contexts including literary theory (Urmson and Wamock, 1961), drama and theatrical studies (Jackson, 2004) and sociological debates on gender and sexuality (Butler, 1993). The distinction between performance and performativity has been described as follows: "performance can be said to involve intention and action on the part of a constituted and volitional subject, whereas performativity is the processes that constitute the subject (and the body of the subject)" (Longhurst, 2007: 38, drawing on Butler, 1993).

In the social sciences, performance has been understood as social practice or behaviour in general. In this sense, theories of performance and performativity relate back to the work of Goffman (1959), who argues that everyday life is a performance and that social actors are constantly trying to communicate to an audience. This work has been developed by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) and Longhurst (2007) who suggest that people are increasingly becoming part of a spectacle and are as such both performers and members of a range of audiences. It is in relation to the work of these authors that I will use the term performativity to indicate the repeated reflexive rituals and practices of place consumers. Furthermore, it is this conceptualisation that has been developed to portray tourists as active agents in the production and consumption of the tourist environment and product (Edensor, 2000; 2001; Franklin,

2003; Mordue, 2005). One of the ongoing debates surrounding this theory concerns the extent to which tourists contest the conventions and scripts of the industry (Mordue, 2005). Another issue which arises is how far tourist performance involves taking on a new role from that of the everyday and how far it is shaped by 'unreflexive' habit (Edensor, 2001). In other words, this raises questions about the extent to which a 'tourist' identity exists. The de-differentiation of various spheres of social activity and the space in which we practise these plays a crucial role in establishing the answers to these questions.

### *Tourist Agency, Power and Performance*

The significance of power in the performance of social space has been discussed in sociological terms by authors such as Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), Longhurst (2007) and Sibley (1995). Abercrombie and Longhurst's (1998) analysis of the mutually engaging relationship between audience and performer and the self-reflexive nature of society is particularly relevant here. They suggest that, "The performer-audience interaction occurs within, or represents, critical areas in which a society is self-reflexive; it provides a kind of window, 'a limited area of transparency', through which an examination of socially and culturally sensitive issues is possible" (ibid.:40). Through this lens, we can examine, for instance, how social processes can create social and cultural inclusion and exclusion within particular spatial contexts and, thus, both enable and constrain performance. In Sibley's (1995) 'Geographies of Exclusion', he highlights exactly this:

For some, the built environment is to be maintained and reproduced in its existing form if it embodies social values which individuals or groups have both the power and the capacity to retain. For others, the built environment constitutes a landscape of domination. It is alienating, and action on the part of the relatively powerless will register in the dominant vocabulary as deviance, threat or subversion. (ibid.:76)

His account of the Metro Centre in Gateshead where adolescents were evicted since they were not seen as major consumers but "deviant, out of place, and threatening the projected image of the development" (ibid.: xii), demonstrates one aspect of this. This is reminiscent of the development of urban spaces in keeping with the interests, or supposed interests, of tourists, mentioned earlier.

The notion of 'heterotopia' (Foucault, 1986; Hetherington, 1997) also highlights the socially constructed nature of space and the associated relations of power. These

'places of otherness' are "spaces in which a new way of ordering emerges that stands in contrast to the taken-for-granted mundane idea of social order that exists within society" (Hetherington, 1997: 40). Therefore, they can be distinguished, both in relation to what or how they should conventionally be, and also in relation to other spaces surrounding them. However, implicit in this social ordering is not only the power of resistance but also the controlling force with which it is associated (ibid.: 42). Therefore, the meanings attached to heterotopic space vary according to the position of the agent (ibid.: 51).

However, it is important to emphasise here that performance should not be reduced to "overarching ideas of resistance to and incorporation into sovereign power sources" as earlier theories of audiences and performance have done (Longhurst, 2007: 20). Power structures are more fluid and complex than such conceptualisations may suggest and, therefore, it is "impossible to reduce the functioning of a society to a dominant type of procedures" (de Certeau, 1984: 48). It is this more fluid conceptualisation of power which will frame the content of this thesis.

If we consider these points in relation to some of the tourism literature we see how issues of power and particularly of tourist agency have given rise to considerable debate within the fields of tourism and cultural studies more specifically. The concept of the tourist as performer is central to much of this debate, as it questions the notion that destination marketing organisations, service providers and professional performers are solely responsible for the production of the tourist/visitor experience. Still, this viewpoint is accepted to varying degrees in the literature. The concept of 'the tourist gaze' initially proposed by Urry (1990) has been very influential in conceptualising the visitor experience and highlights various issues regarding tourist agency. In short, Urry's concept of the gaze signifies how, as tourists, our attention is directed to certain landscapes, attractions and so on. The idea derives from Foucault's work on the gaze. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1976), for example, Foucault argues that the medical gaze is organised and institutionalised. As the bearers of scientific knowledge, doctors are imbued with the power to see through their patients' symptoms to find the 'truth'. Urry argues that the tourist gaze "is as socially organised and systematised as is the gaze of the medic" (1990: 1). His conceptualisation of the tourist gaze suggests that the tourism industry and tourists themselves are in a position of power, objectifying what is worthy of their attention. The power of the industry lies in its ability to direct tourists' experiences while tourists accrue capital through the knowledge they acquire from

visiting places. However, other authors, reversing this theory, propose that "it is the viewing subject that is caught, manipulated, captured in the field of vision" (MacCannell, 2001). In other words, tourists become the objects of the 'local' gaze (Cheong and Miller, 2000; Maoz, 2005). From this perspective, the industry controls tourists' knowledge and experience of their destination, while residents reinforce the local conventions and way of life.

Edensor (2000) and MacCannell (2001) however, while not refuting the controlled nature of tourist space, confer a more active role upon tourists. MacCannell (2001: 24) argues that "what we gaze on as tourists may have been arranged for us in advance; we may go there precisely because other tourists have gone before us; but we remain free to look the other way or not to look at all". These "tactical revolts" (Edensor, 2000) suggest that although the "social hierarchy of consumers" may have elevated tourist attractions to a certain status, it is not the case that visitors cannot see beyond tourist representations. What challenges the tourist to travel is not always the sight itself, an isolated, glorified image, "the extraordinary", but the pursuit of a real, subjective experience; the pursuit of the "unexpected" (MacCannell, 2001: 36). Therefore, tourists may have their own agenda which is not necessarily defined by the 'script' of a guide book.

Central to this argument is also the question of authenticity. The fact that many tourist experiences may not be authentic, but staged representations, suggests that tourists are in some way being duped and that the power of their knowledge is not so legitimate. However, as MacCannell (ibid.) claims, "The second gaze is always aware that something is being concealed from it". Therefore, the tourist has knowledge and therefore power. So, clearly, the physical and symbolic organisation of tourist space influences visitors' performances, but by no means does it bind them completely (Edensor, 2001). Nonetheless, while these notions of the gaze confirm that visitors, selective and critical in their consumption, play an active role in the staging of the visitor experience, they still fail to highlight the importance of locals' everyday activity in the production of space. This omission has been addressed by Mordue who maintains that,

Performance in this context refers to the symbolic interactions, discourses, and signifying practices intimately embroiled in the reproduction of space....This applies as much to local people as it does to tourists and



brokers because the acting out of daily life by anyone involves performance in all public circumstances. (Mordue, 2005).

In other words, locals too play an active role in both the consumption and production of tourist space, not just as producers of tourists' experience but of their own everyday experience within the tourist landscape. Therefore, the 'mutual gaze' (Maoz, 2005), seems to provide a more accurate understanding of the host-guest relationship. That is not to say that the power distribution between the tourist gaze and the local gaze is always equal, but that a dynamic, discursive relationship exists between the two.

While the 'gaze' concept enhances our understanding of the production and consumption of the urban tourism experience, it fails to fully highlight the embodied nature of this experience. Visitors to places engage in cognitive processes when interacting with their surroundings, but the physical situation of their bodies within space, the contact they make with their surroundings and the use of their senses are all ways in which the external becomes internalised. The city in particular provides the stimuli for an embodied experience. It "is brought to life and commonly addressed in humanistic terms; being 'alive' – 'heart' of the city, 'upbeat', pulsating in resonance as individuals interpret experience into meaning" (Middleton, 2000: 209). This experience involves "an engagement with the senses, emotions and imagination" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 138). Bagnall (1996) demonstrates how visitors' experience is essentially triggered by the physical context of the visit. The physicality of the setting generates emotions and imagination which in turn confer meaning. The emotions generated can either correspond with the visitors' expectations and previous knowledge ("the confirmatory emotional map"), or can cause visitors to contest the narratives presented by the setting ("the rejective emotional map"). Thus, again we see how consumers' subjective consciousness constitutes a significant element in the socio-cultural construction of space.

Consideration of the ways in which place consumers move through space also indicates how the visitor experience is embodied. Edensor's description of 'Tourist Walking Performances' (2000: 338-341) provides an example of how tourists construct meaning through the way they walk through tourist spaces. He suggests that in enclavic spaces pedestrians' movements are often directed by tour guides and the 'rigid' structure of the space. In, heterogeneous space, however, movement is more varied and tourists may come into closer contact with others amongst the hustle and bustle. Edensor also indicates how the act of walking changes meaning through the

simultaneous experience of "diverse activities, sensations and sights" (2000: 340). While informative, this theory is somewhat limited in that it focuses on walking and does not consider other means by which people move through space. Also, while this theory can be applied to tourist activity, it is also relevant to the movement of people in everyday situations and everyday places. The distinctions and continuities between tourism and the everyday are in fact an essential aspect of tourism theory and practice and it is to this theme which this discussion will now turn.

### *Tourist v. Everyday Performance*

In terms of the distinction between everyday and tourist performance, it is important to consider the de-differentiation of various forms of social activity and of the time and spaces within which they take place (Crouch, 1999; Edensor, 2001). Implicit in the concept of the tourist as performer is the assumption that as tourists we take on different roles and engage in different practices from those of the everyday (MacCannell, 1999). While this may be true to some extent, the tenets upon which the distinction between tourism and the everyday is based have been questioned.

Firstly, the idea that as tourists we are free from routine and hard work often associated with our everyday lives has been challenged by the notion of the 'work of tourism' (Bagnall, 2003; Edensor, 2000; MacCannell, 1999). Tourism has its own set of rituals and routines including "things which *must* be seen, photographs which *have to be* taken, souvenirs and postcards which *need* to be acquired, the *imperatives* to sample a range of cultures and commodities" (Edensor, 2000: 334) and so on.

Secondly, it is often thought that as tourists we take on a different identity. Tourism is said to encapsulate a ludic spirit through which visitors can either relax and reveal their true selves, or be 'somebody else' without worrying about what is expected of them (Edensor, 2000: 325). However, 'letting our hair down' is not just part of tourism but is what we do in our leisure time also. Furthermore, taking on roles is not just a performative aspect of being a tourist but one which is situated in ordinary life. Abercrombie and Longhurst's (1998) discussion of 'diffused audiences' is influential here. One of the main characteristics which distinguishes the diffused audience from the simple or mass audience is the erosion of the boundary between performer and audience. However, the main point to be drawn from this concept is that, "So deeply infused into everyday life is performance that we are unaware of it in ourselves or in

others. Life is a constant performance; we are audience and performer at the same time; everybody is an audience all the time" (ibid.: 72-73).

Therefore, it seems that, yes, we are performing all the time, subtly making statements about ourselves to our audience, but that this is often an 'unreflexive' performance (Edensor, 2001). Furthermore, it has also been argued that the ability to perform at tourist sites is more a question of the possession of economic and cultural capital than the status of being a local or a tourist (Mordue, 2005). While tourist destinations and the 'culture' of the tourist prescribe certain performative conventions, Edensor (2000: 341) suggests that "it is necessary to consider the continuities with everyday life as well as the transformations that tourists perform". He claims that visitors make sense of space in terms of their own personal and cultural profile and previous knowledge, therefore visitors react to their surroundings, to a great extent, in an unreflexive manner; in other words their response is a continuation of their everyday selves (Edensor, 2001). When we start being tourists, we don't necessarily stop being who we were before. A person can simultaneously be a tourist, a teacher and a music-lover, for example. So, in this sense, performance in a tourism context could be seen to depend just as much, or maybe even more, on personal identity than tourist or local identity.

Thirdly, another difference between tourism and the everyday is argued to be the activities we engage in. However, many of the pursuits we engage in as tourists we also practice in our leisure time in general. At home we still visit museums, go shopping, eat out, and so on. Finally, tourism is usually considered to take place somewhere removed from everyday experience. However, as a result of de-industrialisation, the places where people live and work also often become the places people choose to visit (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000). In the case of urban tourism locations, tourist activity often coincides with the everyday leisure activity of the local population. Therefore both groups are in a sense visitors, which suggests that their performances are largely similar. Moreover, the identity of urban spaces, in particular, has changed not only in relation to what they were but in relation to other urban spaces. The increasing de-differentiation of urban spaces (Nielsen, 1999) implies that, in appearance urban destinations may not constitute anything radically different for the tourist compared to their home environment. The physical landscape is, of course, only one aspect of how places can differ.

However, there is a difference between the performance of tourism and everyday life. What is different is the break with the same routine (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994: 133), the feeling of being free in a new, or at least different from the everyday, environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that "the tourist's experience of a destination.....is grounded first of all in the body of the tourist, in his/her geographical consciousness" (Li, 2000: 874-5). How tourists' and locals' performances are most likely to differ, then, is in their meaning to themselves, as the actors. While tourists and residents may both be at leisure and engaged in the same activity, the residents will be aware of their location in their home environment and of the associations which this has, whereas for tourists this represents perhaps not a radically different experience but one less familiar than the everyday and thus a different set of associations.

## **2.4 Culture and Consumption**

Having considered some of the literature pertaining to the urban tourism element of this study, it is now time to turn to some of the more sociological concepts which have a bearing on the subject in question. Some of these sociological approaches provide the link between the consumer-orientated framework of the urban tourism industry and the cultural 'product' which is consumed within it.

### **2.4.1 The Culture of Consumption**

In recent years, it has been acknowledged that consumerism has become an all-encompassing aspect of everyday modern life. Consumerism can be defined as "the cultural expression and manifestation of the apparently ubiquitous act of consumption" (Miles, 1998a:4). Therefore, it is argued that people's relationship with the act of consumption and places of consumption increasingly determines the construction of everyday experience (Miles, 1998a: 1; 1998b: 1007). Consumption has generally been defined along the lines of "the selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair and disposal of any product or service" (Campbell, 1995: 102). However, such definitions fail to address the cultural element of consumption (Campbell, 1995: 102; Miles, 1998a: 3). Despite the increasing importance of consumption to everyday life, though, it is not until recently that social scientists have turned to the study of consumption per se, rather than simply as a by-product of production, as it has often been perceived in the past (Miles, 1998a; Miles and Paddison, 1998). The significance of consumption has been highlighted in relation to aspects of social and cultural change. From a modernist perspective, work and production levels played a major role in defining identity and

success. However, the emergence of mass society, the introduction of Fordism, and the consequent increase in spending power, especially among the working class (Miles, 1998a: 6-7; Miles and Paddison, 1998: 817-821), along with greater leisure time provision, have all been determining factors for the growing significance of consumption in contemporary society. In fact, Miles (1998a: 7) argues that consumerism afforded people "a qualitatively new experience of society" where luxury goods became everyday items. The implications of this 'consumer society' are "not merely that the economy is structured around the selling and promoting of goods more than it is around their production, but also that members of society treat high levels of consumption as indicative of social success and personal happiness and hence choose consuming as their overriding life goal" (Campbell, 1995: 100). Consumer goods and services take on a meaning over and above their economic exchange or functional value, as symbols of social status. What we consume rather than what we produce plays an increasing role in the construction of everyday identities. Therefore, it becomes evident that the association of consumption has changed, from a purely economic concept, to one of social significance. Via the act of consumption, it is argued that we create our own identities and make judgements about the identities of others (Sharpley, 2000: 384). These aspects of consumerism, and particularly the consumption of signs, have often been contextualised in relation to theories of postmodernism (Baudrillard, 1983; Featherstone, 1991). Under this paradigm, the functional, needs-based association of consumption is disregarded. However, this emphasis on the symbolic aspects of the consumption process tends to ignore its empirical and ideological elements (Campbell, 1995: 23).

A central point addressed in the consumer studies literature is the connection between consumption, leisure and identity. While it is now possible to talk of a 'post-work' society (Rojek, 2000: 3) where leisure is of increasing importance and where there is a greater variety of leisure activities available, this has to be put into some kind of context. Our leisure pursuits may say something about who we are, but professional lives are also significant in constructing personal identities (ibid.: 37). Furthermore, the significance of leisure is still generally defined in relation to work - it is a break from work. Moreover, it has been argued that "tourism and leisure, as the forum of legitimated transgression of normal codes of social behaviour, are forms of ideological control to maintain capitalist relations of production." (Ateljevic, 2000: 374). This view of consumer society as exploitative and dehumanising questions consumers' power to exercise choice within a consumer-oriented market. However, it also depicts

consumers as dupes caught up in the structural forces of a commercialised world. This would be to misconstrue the dialectical nature of the workings of power within socio-cultural entities. Certainly, capitalist society lays down structural paths for consumers to explore. However, consumers are also free to take their own paths and to interpret them in their own way. Moreover, consumers are themselves involved in the construction of those very social forces which encircle them. This process is encapsulated by the concept of "trajectories" in the work of de Certeau (1984: xviii). Similarly, Miles explains how consumers "can invest their own personal meanings in what they consume, and consumption can be a significant source of creativity," but "however expressively and creatively people consume, the arena within which they do so is ultimately prescribed for them by consumer capitalism" (1998a: 154). The issues of structure and agency implied here are of central significance to the main thread of this thesis which portrays the place consumer as an active agent in the construction and experience of the surrounding urban tourist landscape. This argument will be developed further in the following chapter.

The above discussion indicates the ideological nature of consumerism and, in particular, how it can be liberating but also how it can be constraining. This 'consuming paradox' (Miles, 1998a; 1998b) is also apparent in the fact that while consumer society purports to offer increased choice, this is actually a false illusion since the experiences which it offers are becoming increasingly uniform. Furthermore, constant opportunities to consume reduce the choice not to consume. However, this is not to suggest that the opportunity to consume guarantees the ability to consume. For many, the possibilities of a consumer lifestyle are beyond reality. Therefore, while consumption can be considered as a form of social and cultural expression, creating choices and enabling the accumulation of experiences, there is still a large section of the population for whom the consumer experience is out of reach (Miles, 1998b: 1003; Middleton, 2000: 209, Roberts, 1999: 70-1). This issue will be addressed through the theme of social inclusion which forms a central point of discussion in this thesis.

#### **2.4.2 Culture, Consumption and Identity**

Consumption, in the preceding paragraphs, has been framed within a predominantly economic context. However, the links between culture and consumption should not be overlooked given their fundamental role in defining the scope of this thesis. Culture is conceived not only as a unifying force, but also as a form of distinction (MacCannell,

1999; Meethan, 2000). "To have a culture is not only to belong, but to be different from others" (Meethan, 2000: 197). In fact, cultural diversity is characteristic of society. As MacCannell (1999: 25) suggests, to "talk in terms of a *culture* seems....a profound misunderstanding of culture and society. Social structure is differentiation.....There has never been a cultural totality." In the same way, consumption can be considered as individuals' attempt to differentiate themselves from the mass and create their own identities or as the need to seek comfort and create meaning in an alienating environment (MacCannell, 1999: 55; Miles and Paddison, 1998: 816). The links between culture and consumption become even more tenable if we begin to consider culture as an object of consumption. However, in order to do this we must first establish what is meant by the term culture. There tend to be three understandings of what culture is: a process of intellectual and spiritual refinement; a way of life based on shared beliefs, values and practices; and the product and expression of artistic activity (Williams, 1981). However, as Richards (1996) indicates it is the latter two which are predominantly used in more recent times. He argues that these two uses can be summarised as "culture as process" and "culture as product" (ibid.: 264-265). What is not emphasised is how these different aspects of culture are actually interrelated. Cultural processes are involved in the production of cultural works and practices while cultural products also become embedded in cultural processes or ways of life. This is true of society today and societies of the past. What has changed in more recent years is the increased economic element involved in the production of culture. It is this development that has led to the increasing conceptualisation of culture as a product and what has been referred to as the commodification of culture (Hewison, 1987).

Such an affirmation leads us to consider in what sense culture in contemporary society can be considered a commodity and if it can, whether it differs from other commodities. The pervasiveness of consumer society suggests that culture, too, can be seen as a commodity. MacCannell (1999: 22-23) makes the point that culture may be marketed as a commodity but that there is a difference between the economic and social framework of the old material commodity and culture as it is. The packaging of place culture by tourism organisations, for example, transforms culture into an experience which can be bought and sold. The experiential element of culture in this sense sets it apart from the consumption of material products in the marketplace. Furthermore, the consumption of culture surpasses the purely utilitarian purpose of the consumption of other commodities. Culture can be assigned a symbolic value as a marker of social status. It also possesses a humanistic value as a tool for education and regeneration.

Therefore, the consumption of culture has also become a means to an end. Sharpley's (2000) 'typology of tourist consumption practices' based on Holt's (1995) 'typology of consumption practices' model, for example, indicates how consumption can constitute an end in itself or a means to an end. The typology demonstrates how consuming can be understood as a means of experience, play, integration and classification. So, the idea of goods and services having a symbolic value over and above their economic or functional value is not such a recent phenomenon, since objects are always consumed within a certain cultural context (ibid.: 383). In this sense then, the consumption of culture is not so different from that of other commodities. However, commodity implies something which has an ephemeral value which can easily be replaced. Culture, however, tends to have a more permanent value since it is rooted in society. Furthermore, it is also possible, depending on the definition of culture that is used, that the consumption of culture is based to a certain extent on a subconscious act, whereas the consumption of consumer goods involves more intentional behaviour. Nonetheless, while a theoretical discussion concerning the potential commodification of culture is interesting, without any empirical basis, it is a question which is difficult to verify.

Changes in what is consumed, how and by whom have also given rise to considerable debate. Which activities are classed as leisure and in turn which of these can be classed as cultural are questions commonly referred to. For example, shopping, once considered in functional terms as a chore, has been transformed into a leisure pursuit, thus creating one of the main leisure industries. Furthermore, there has been a transformation in terms of what can be consumed as culture and a breakdown has occurred in the distinction between what is considered high and low culture as cultural forms borrow from each other. This postmodern understanding of the fragmentation of culture has received considerable attention in the field of cultural studies. Cultural taste used to be regarded as a marker of class in the sense that people from the upper classes consumed highbrow culture, while those of working class status consumed lowbrow or popular culture, if this could even be considered culture. However, it is argued that class no longer prescribes cultural taste or at least not to the same extent (Miles and Paddison, 1998: 819). Bourdieu's theory has been extremely influential here (1984: 1-2) in arguing that a "social hierarchy of consumers" has come to replace traditional class divisions. In other words, there exists a new class whose status is not defined by the traditional understanding of class or by economic capital but by the accumulation of cultural capital. Therefore implying that the traditional notion of class distinction has perhaps less significance than access to consumption as far as social



status is concerned. This theory is important in that it demonstrates how it is not only economic forces which are involved in the act of consumption but also social and cultural ones. However, Bourdieu's theory of a class which seeks social power through the consumption of culture is not entirely new since Veblen (1979) had long before introduced the notion of the 'leisure class'. Bourdieu's concept, however, is slightly more sophisticated in that it is based on the significance of symbolic capital rather than the possession of material goods (Campbell, 1995: 104). Furthermore, it emphasises the symbolic rather than the purely instrumental nature of consumption.

Peterson and Kern's, (1996) study of cultural omnivores is also extremely significant since it challenges the relationship between social status and patterns of cultural consumption by questioning the division between elite and 'mass' cultures. The omnivore concept suggests that the upper classes are acquiring broader cultural tastes, including forms traditionally associated with other social classes. This, they claim, is a result of various factors including migration and social class mobility which have been responsible for the interaction of people from different backgrounds and therefore with different tastes. Also exposure to media images, an increasing tolerance to difference, the welcoming of new forms of expression in the art world and the transformation of youth cultures have contributed to this phenomenon. However, this theory raises the question of whether the increase in the cultural omnivore has come about due to individuals' omnivorous tastes or due to a variety of tastes amongst the group. van Eijck (2000) claims that both of these factors have played a role:

there is both more cultural heterogeneity within the higher status groups, with the upwardly mobile displaying different tastes than those who have grown up in high status families themselves, and there is a mixture of tastes going on, leading to omnivorous cultural behaviour (213).

The omnivore thesis also challenges assertions concerning the fragmentation of culture because forms of culture which had formerly been associated with different social groups are brought together (Longhurst, 2007: 91). However, the existence of the univore, at the other end of the spectrum to the omnivore, and largely associated with lower status groups, suggests that it is not society as a whole which is becoming more open to diverse cultural tastes. Furthermore, with regards to the omnivore-univore thesis, care should be taken as to not take for granted what people say they like. This may be an expression of what they are expected to like rather than what they actually like (Longhurst, 2007: 100-101). It is also important to consider what people do not like (ibid.: 97). The dislikes of the omnivores, for example, indicate that their tastes may not

be quite as broad as the term implies (van Eijck, 2000: 215). Finally, it is necessary to consider not only what is consumed, but how it is consumed.

A further question which arises from the above is the extent to which there exists a strategy upon which the leisure class base their consumption. There seem to be two lines of thought on the subject; one which perceives leisure activity as symbolic in terms of signifying a specific social position and lifestyle (Bourdieu, 1984; Baudrillard, 1983), and another which argues that the leisure class are not particularly motivated by status and therefore understands leisure as simply the consumption of free time (Wynne and O'Connor, 1998). With regards to the omnivore theory, it is argued that this is a strategy for the middle class to reinforce their social position. Consuming a wider selection of cultural forms rather than just one confers more knowledge and therefore more power (Longhurst, 2007: 27). However, others claim that omnivorous tendencies are not aimed at acquiring a particular social status but are just a reflection of omnivores' receptiveness to variety (Wynne and O'Connor, 1998). If we follow the former theory, that to be an omnivore is a strategy of social distinction, there are two possibilities. Cultural consumption can be considered a tactic used to reassure oneself or one used to impress others as Longhurst and Savage (1996) claim. Campbell (1995:118), however, has made a convincing case that "individuals should be viewed as less motivated by a concern to communicate messages to others, as by the pleasure which they derive from the self-illusory experiences that they construct out of the images or associations attached to products". While there is evidence to support both of these arguments, it is important to remember that cultural practices should not be solely equated with social distinction. Nor should they always be regarded as strategic or tactical, despite the possibility of actors' intent (Longhurst, 2007: 123). Culture, contrary to how it is conceptualised by the theories of Bourdieu (1984) and de Certeau (1984), cannot be reduced to a simple, structured form. This is what makes researching the consumption of culture such a complex task.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The main point we can draw from the above discussion then is that it seems the principles of consumerism, from mass consumption to custom-made experiences, may be turning full circle. Although it may be that individuals seek to express their individuality and differentiate themselves from the mass, here lies the 'consuming paradox' (Miles, 1998a; 1998b), since they are actually constrained by an increasingly uniform experience. However, this does not imply that consumers are passive in the

production of this experience. The production and consumption process converges as the consumer defines his or her own experience at the point and time of consumption. Therefore, consumers of culture are active in both the production and consumption process. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that cultural tastes are no longer tightly rooted in social class (Peterson and Kern, 1996) and so it is important to recognise that other factors such as ethnicity, age and gender also play a role in access to and interpretation of culture (van Eijck, 2000: 211).

In order to assess these issues it is important to establish what the consumption of culture means from a consumer's point of view. Research in the field, however, is lacking in this respect. Moreover, there is a lack of research based on the situational context within which consumption takes place. This is particularly true of the consumption of culture within the urban tourist landscape. It is clear that situating the study of consumption in space can increase understanding of how we are "active participants in the social construction of our embracing spatialities" (Soja, 1996: 1). The urban landscape provides the ideal focus for the study of consumption since over half of the population worldwide and over eighty percent of Britons inhabit urban areas (Middleton, 2000: 208; 218) and furthermore, it is here where "the combined forces of leisure, culture and commerce appear to have most impact in shaping personal and social identities" (Mordue, 2005: 16). Through this thesis, it is this issue which I intend to address, with specific reference to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape.

From the theoretical account presented above, it is clear that a whole range of subjects and theoretical paradigms relate to the consumption of culture within the urban tourist landscape. However, these do not entirely address the research question with which we are concerned here. This is due to the theoretical complexity of the interrelating subjects of tourism and leisure, and the production and consumption of culture with which we are dealing. Hence, my attempt to try and connect these concepts, through the methodological approach that this thesis will follow. Furthermore, this research will aim to resolve some of the methodological issues of existing research by adopting an empirical (Miles, 1998b:1005-1006) and qualitative (de Certeau, 1984:xviii) focus which authors before me have called for.

Before I proceed to address any methodological matters in full though, I feel it is fitting to consider next how the theoretical issues presented in this chapter relate to Liverpool in particular. The next chapter, therefore, will review and analyse strategic documents

and existing research based on Liverpool, thus indicating how the city is being shaped as a place for the consumption of culture and tourism, and providing an initial insight into the potential implications of the strategic direction which is being followed.

## **3. Strategic Approaches to Culture, Tourism and Regeneration in Liverpool**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the increasing desirability of cities as places to live in and visit is reflected in the growing trends of urban tourism and city centre living. The potential benefits of culture and tourism for regeneration are that culture can be promoted as a unique asset to attract tourists but also to engender pride among residents and encourage them to participate in the cultural life of the city. Tourism, in turn, can help to increase the economy and revitalise the city through social activity. However, tensions between cultural policy as a driver for economic regeneration on the one hand, and as a facilitator of sustained cultural expression on the other, highlight one of the key issues surrounding current cultural regeneration initiatives. This matter has been discussed in relation to Glasgow (Garcia, 2004) and also Liverpool (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). In light of its status as European Capital of Culture 2008, Liverpool represents a prime case through which to examine the implementation of cultural and tourism strategies and their role in regeneration (Kokosalakis *et al.*, 2009).

The aim of this chapter is, firstly, to present and analyse some of the strategies and key documents relating to Liverpool's tourism and cultural industries; secondly, to discuss some of the research which has already been carried out in relation to culture and tourism in Liverpool; and finally, to consider the implications of these studies and strategies for regeneration, future research and cultural and tourism policy making in the city. It will therefore refer to the scope of the strategies, the partnership and collaboration involved in implementing them and the extent to which issues addressed within them are actually engaged with.

### **3.2 The Culture of Liverpool: A Historical Perspective**

No attempt is made here to summarise the long and rich cultural history of Liverpool which has been well documented by Belchem (2006) and Munck (2003), amongst others. However, to set the scene, it may be useful here to mention a few points of reference. The year, 2007, marked Liverpool's 800<sup>th</sup> birthday, in other words, 800 years since Liverpool was awarded its Royal Charter by King John. Starting as a small fishing village, Liverpool grew to an influential port at the centre of the global economy in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It suffered severe economic and social decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but

now appears to be entering what is hoped to be a period of substantial and long term regeneration.

The port has been crucial to the history of Liverpool, not only in economic terms but in social and cultural terms also. It was through the port of Liverpool that the city influenced and was influenced both socially and culturally. The social influence of the port is still evident today, reflected, for example, in the ethnic diversity of Liverpool's population. The history of the port, however, particularly the wealth that was created on the back of the slave trade, is not necessarily a source of pride. In their defence, though, some Liverpool citizens also fought for the abolition of the slave trade. In cultural terms, Liverpool's port was responsible for a variety of influences. The 2007 Souled Out Films production 'Liverpool's Cunard Yanks', documents how Liverpool became the stage for a cultural revolution, through cultural imports that merchant seamen brought back from New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This puts the often overstated influence of the Beatles in perspective.

The port, however, has not always been a symbol of prosperity for the city of Liverpool. From the late 1960s Liverpool failed to rise to the demands of containerisation, shifting trade routes and modes of transport (Milne, 2006: 264; Murden, 2006: 429), resulting in severe decline of the port area and of course mass unemployment. However, the port today still functions, albeit not in the same location. The majority of dock activity moved further down the River to Seaforth when the headquarters of the local port authority, Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, relocated from the Port of Liverpool building to Seaforth Dock. Ironically, in terms of the amount of cargo handled, the port is busier today than ever before, however, due to labour-saving production devices, it operates with only a fraction of the workforce (Meegan, 2006: 68). Nonetheless, while mass unemployment clearly exacerbated social problems in the city, driving levels of deprivation higher and dampening spirits, its impact was not purely negative. The adverse social conditions in Liverpool would later constitute a source of inspiration for artists like the playwright Alan Bleasdale and writer Carla Lane whose work constituted a social commentary of the city but with a humorous twist. This resilience in the face of adversity is said to be characteristic of the people of Liverpool (Murden, 2006: 464-466).

The above are just a few examples of the past significance of the port and its impact on the culture of Liverpool today. Other industrial activity in the city, however, has also

markedly shaped the nature of Liverpool and its people. The manufacturing industry in Liverpool suffered from national and international recession in the 1970s, resulting in the closure of numerous factories in the Liverpool area in particular. This, of course, precipitated the decline of the city's economy. Unemployment rose and the population fell as people left in search of better fortunes (Murden, 2006:428-429).

The 1980s were particularly challenging and notorious years in the history of Liverpool. Reactions to adverse social conditions of exclusion, deprivation and discrimination led to the Toxteth riots in 1981. The negative image of Liverpool was intensified by a history of industrial action and Militant politics. Stigmatised by these events, Liverpool's chances of economic revival were bleak. Despite these unfortunate events, the 1980s in Liverpool did have its highlights. Attempts at cultural regeneration, included the development of derelict land in the Dingle area to provide a site for the International Garden Festival in 1984. At this time also, the Albert Dock and its warehouses were transformed into retail, office and residential space. These initiatives were instigated by the Merseyside Development Corporation as part of a new tourism and leisure based regeneration strategy. However, despite the success of these schemes in terms of generating visitors and revenue for the city, they were criticised for excluding the local authority and for failing to resolve crucial issues such as the deprivation of many communities (Murden, 2006: 445-447).

With the port and manufacturing now playing a lesser role in the city's economy, it is the leisure and cultural industries that account for the most significant economic activity in the new millennium (Liverpool City Council, 2002). At present, the dynamics of the city are constantly shifting as new strategies, proposals, projects, and organisations come into being, each with their own agenda to shape the city in some way. At the moment, when the city is changing on a daily basis, keeping track of every project, policy or decision presents quite a challenge. Certainly there has been some contention as change promises to be 'for the good of the city', while there are often negative implications for certain groups and individuals. In this respect, it is important to remember that despite the momentum that is gathering and pointing towards a reversal of the city's fortunes, Liverpool still remains the most deprived council area in England (Audit Commission, 2006: 12; Impacts 08, 2007a: 25; Wilks-Heeg, 2003: 50;). As a result of its levels of deprivation, Liverpool has received substantial support through various schemes. Recently £840 million of European funding was awarded through the Merseyside Objective One programme 2000-2006, in order to aid the area's economy,

as part of a £2 billion regeneration programme (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 25). This was the second round of funding awarded through this initiative, the first round being granted for the period 1994-2000. However, low income levels in Liverpool restrict the extent to which this consumer economy can grow, and therefore visitors are needed to sustain economic activity in the city (Meegan, 2003: 72-74).

### **3.3 The Regeneration of Liverpool?**

The last few years have brought some significant developments for Liverpool. In 2008, the city held the title of European Capital of Culture 2008. Furthermore, in 2004 Liverpool was given the inscription of 'Liverpool - Maritime Mercantile City' with various parts of the city being designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in view of their historic significance to the city's past as a commercial port and their relevance in terms of global heritage, based on their role in "the growth of world trade, mercantile culture, the trans-atlantic slave trade and mass European emigration" (Liverpool City Council, n.d.). These achievements obviously represent huge potential in terms of regenerating Liverpool.

However, public sector intervention prior to these accolades has been given credit for paving the way for private sector developers to invest in Liverpool (Meegan, 2003: 66). Much of this development has been based on old industrial and office buildings converted into residential space, and forms part of a targeted campaign to bring people, preferably young, affluent professionals, back into the city centre (Munck, 2003: 7). For years, Liverpool city centre was not considered a desirable residential location, and between 1971 and 1991 the population dropped from 3,600 to 2,340. However the city centre population in 2001 stood at 8,648 and was estimated to reach 14,000 in 2006 (Liverpool City Council, 2004). In 2005, Liverpool's population as a whole was said to be increasing for the first time since the 1930s (Liverpool City Council, 2005; 2006b). While the 2005 estimate of 447,500 did indicate an increase on the 2001 census figures which recorded Liverpool's population as 439,473 (Liverpool City Council, 2006a: 1; 2006b), the estimate of 436,100 for 2006 raises questions about population growth in Liverpool (Liverpool City Council, 2008). The population increase in the city centre does appear to mirror the trend of city centre living. However, while developers continue to fill the city centre with luxury apartments, the indications are that this market has now reached saturation and apartments are lying empty. The family market, however, is struggling to find housing in the city centre,



which raises concerns about the sustainability of housing schemes there and the ensuing consequences for the city centre community (Liverpool Daily Post, 24 April 2007).

Currently, talk of Liverpool's renaissance is often associated with the city's status as European Capital of Culture 2008 (Impacts 08, 2007a: 74-5; 2009: 5). Over the last few years there has been a particular emphasis on investment in the physical infrastructure of the city. The document 'Regeneration & Development in Liverpool City Centre 1995-2004' (marketing@liverpool, 2004), gives some indication of the extent of the physical regeneration of the city centre in the latter half of the 1990s and first half of this decade. It outlines an impressive range of developments for commercial, retail, residential, academic and leisure use. However, it also demonstrates that the focus on improving the city's physical infrastructure had begun prior to Liverpool bidding for European Capital of Culture. While winning the European Capital of Culture bid may have acted as a catalyst for some of the current physical development, this work had also predominantly been planned in advance of and independently from the bid. However, many schemes were actually referred to in the bid, and thirty of these were pinpointed as key to the delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme. Sixteen of these had been completed by the end of 2006 (Impacts 08, 2007a: 75). The majority of these projects, twenty out of thirty, are based in the city centre. The Big Dig, a major regeneration project of £3 billion, encompasses some of these projects, including the City Centre Movement Strategy, a scheme aimed at upgrading the city centre's streets and public spaces. Other city centre initiatives include Liverpool City Central BID (Business Improvement District) which encompasses 500 businesses in the core retail area of the city centre and aims to "provide a safe, clean, attractive, and well promoted distinctive trading area within the city centre" (marketing@liverpool, 2005: 1). Much of this development has been overseen by Liverpool Vision, a regeneration company specifically focusing on Liverpool city centre and one of the first regeneration companies in the country to be based on public / private partnership.

However, the concentration of development in the city centre has fuelled the criticism that not enough is being invested in the inner city and suburbs of Liverpool. While the heart of the city needs to be brought back to life, a balance needs to be struck between regenerating the city centre and investing in the inner city and suburbs, since it appears that currently the reach of this regeneration is restricted, both in geographical and social terms. However, this is not a problem which relates to Liverpool only, but is a

phenomenon of many British cities (Evans, 2003: 26). Nonetheless, if it is the case that Liverpool remains the most deprived city in England, then perhaps there is a greater case for this imbalance to be redressed.

### **3.4 Cultural Policy**

#### **3.4.1 The Value of Culture**

Culture has been identified as essential to the city (Munck, 2003: 13). However, for Liverpool, culture has taken on a particularly significant role as a tool for economic, social and environmental regeneration. In previous decades, cultural policy was avoided and any attempts at devising cultural strategies were unsuccessful, but, since the beginning of this decade, creative activity, leisure and retail have featured as the core elements of the city's regeneration programme (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: 347). The convergence of the once separate spheres of culture and economics, and in particular the increasing use of cultural strategies to drive the economy of cities, has been widely commented on (Avery, 2000; Richards, 1996). This observation is especially relevant to a city such as Liverpool, which has invested more in culture than any other major city (Audit Commission, 2006: 22; Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a: 9). Liverpool City Council now contributes £33 million to the city's leisure and cultural provision (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 32). £2 billion has been set aside for investment in Liverpool's cultural sector over the next few years, £1 billion of this public funding and another £1 billion private (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 6). The cultural and leisure industries account for more than 15,000 jobs (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 5), with a predicted further 14,000 jobs to be created in the cultural sector<sup>1</sup> in Liverpool by 2012 (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 6).

In 1999, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport suggested that all local authorities should devise a Local Cultural Strategy by 2002, and issued guidance on how this should be approached (DCMS, 1999; 2000). The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool (Liverpool City Council, 2002) follows this guidance quite closely. Liverpool's strategy highlights the significance of culture for Liverpool as "a place to live", "a place to work", and "a place to visit". It states that culture will be used to attract and retain people in Liverpool through its cultural offer and the quality of life which cultural activity can provide (ibid.: 24). More specifically, an emphasis on culture will provide residents with greater access to cultural activity and therefore a better quality of life; it will create

increased job opportunities; and will encourage investment as an international visitor destination which delivers high quality cultural experiences (ibid.: 2-3).

The scope of the Cultural Strategy for Liverpool (ibid.: 5) defines culture quite broadly as:

- built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology
- children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- informal leisure pursuits, entertainment and food
- libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- media, film, television, video and language
- museums, artifacts, archives and design
- parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation
- performing and visual arts, craft and fashion
- sports, events facilities and development
- tourism, festivals and attractions

The above indicate the material and overt expressions of culture. However, the strategy also acknowledges the notion of lived culture, as indicated in the list below:

- relationships
- shared memories, experiences and identity
- diverse cultural, religious and historical backgrounds
- standards
- what we consider valuable to pass onto future generations.

This draws, closely, on the model presented by DCMS (1999: 9; 2000: 7). However, while employing set formats can produce effective results, there are also dangers inherent in following these too closely such as the standardisation of the cultural offer. On the other hand, the local cultural strategy offers a level of autonomy over cultural development, which local authorities did not previously possess, therefore allowing for the diversification of the cultural strategy.

The cultural strategy for Liverpool adopts a thematic approach, as proposed by DCMS (1999: 7; 2000: 36). Three main supporting themes have been devised as guidelines for the strategy. These are:

- Create, innovate and sustain
- Participate, include and engage

- Regenerate, improve and renew

and are expected to achieve the following respective cultural outcomes:

- A sustainable cultural infrastructure
- An inclusive and dynamic community
- A premier European City

(Liverpool City Council, 2002: 71-74)

These are the same as the desired outcomes that the city aims to achieve as European Capital of Culture (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 8). While it is a positive sign that the principal cultural policy makers share the same vision and aims, there is an indication here that much of Liverpool's cultural policy is dependent on its European Capital of Culture status (Audit Commission, 2006: 30).

Culture and cultural policy were particularly crucial during 2008 since the city held the European Capital of Culture title for that year. Originally set up to manage the bid, and subsequently responsible for managing and delivering Liverpool's European Capital of Culture programme, Liverpool Culture Company played a key role in organising the city's cultural activity. The Company's vision "is to deliver the best ever European Capital of Culture in 2008 and to leave an enduring legacy for the people of Liverpool" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 18). The Company's objectives are:

- To create and present the best of local, national and international art and events in all genres
- To build community enthusiasm, creativity and participation
- To maintain, enhance and grow the cultural infrastructure of the city
- To increase the levels of visitors and inward investment in the city
- To reposition Liverpool as a world class city by 2008
- To provide efficient and effective management of the Liverpool Culture Company Programme." (ibid).

However, since regeneration projects are taking place in the city independently from Liverpool Culture Company's initiatives, to what extent any outcomes associated with these objectives could be wholly attributable to the European Capital of Culture programme is debatable.

Impacts 08, a research project run by Liverpool University and Liverpool John Moores University, and commissioned by Liverpool City Council, has the aim, in fact, of

evaluating the social, cultural, economic and environmental effects of Liverpool's hosting the European Capital of Culture title in 2008. 'The Baseline Report' (Impacts 08, 2007a), disseminates the preliminary findings of the longitudinal study, which starts from the pre-bid phase in 2000 and ends in 2009/10. The research carried out so far, is structured around six main themes, based on Liverpool Culture Company's six objectives. Importantly, the report highlights the need to disaggregate the effects of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture status from developments which are taking place anyway. Failure to do this would produce an imprecise measure of the impacts of the European Capital of Culture programme.

### **3.4.2 Partnership and Collaboration**

Above, the main principles and scope of Liverpool's cultural policy have been laid out. However, for this policy to be successfully implemented depends not only on the vision and actions of its authors, but also on the cooperation of other organisations which comprise the cultural infrastructure.

Liverpool's cultural system appears to be built on a significant level of partnership and collaboration. The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool is set within a national and regional context and highlights how it shares the vision and aims of other bodies within this wider geographical framework (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 8-23). Particular attention is given to the relationship between Liverpool and Manchester, as the region's two core cities and how they aim to establish both healthy competition and synergy between each other (ibid.: 14-22). On a local level, Liverpool City Council and its partners, in particular, the Liverpool Partnership Group and Liverpool Culture Company seem to be in accordance with each other concerning the vision for the city, to become "a premier European City" (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 26; Liverpool Partnership Group, 2002: 1) or "world class city" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 18). There is also a certain amount of collaboration between the public and private sector, especially as far as the Capital of Culture programme is concerned. In strategic terms, this is considered to be crucial by Liverpool Culture Company (ibid.: 20). However, despite this sense of cultural leadership coming from within local government, a number of disputes have arisen and been highlighted by the media, thus undermining confidence in the city's leaders (Audit Commission, 2006: 36).

### **3.4.3 Liverpool's Cultural Offer**

The success of the city's cultural policy also depends largely on the scope and quality of the cultural offer. Liverpool has a wide-ranging cultural offer which, according to the Impacts 08 programme, is perceived on the whole to be good (Impacts08, 2007a: 38-41). However, this initial evaluation doesn't take into account the perceptions of residents. More recent findings indicate that on the whole Liverpool residents are proud of the city's broad cultural offer, considering it to be "equal to or better than other UK cities (Impacts 08, 2009: 4-5). The overall assessment of the city's Cultural and Leisure Services is also rated as good (Audit Commission, 2006: 7). Liverpool's cultural attractions include one of the largest national collections of museums and galleries outside London, collectively known as National Museums Liverpool, which is currently expanding. Also in the museums and galleries sector is Tate Liverpool and a number of less renowned but equally interesting independent galleries and art spaces. Music, theatre, architecture and sport also form part of Liverpool's wide ranging cultural offer. However, it has been argued that Liverpool's cultural offer is too narrowly framed by "nostalgia, traditionalism and yesterday's successes" (Ben-Tovim, 2003: 236). This appears to be a valid point as there is a considerable amount of more innovative cultural activity which currently appears to be under-promoted and going unrecognised. While there has been huge publicity concerning large scale regeneration projects such as Liverpool One, the new city centre retail and leisure development, there has been very little reference to the opening of less mainstream initiatives. In Autumn 2006, A Foundation launched its Greenland Street venture, based on three former industrial warehouses, now transformed into three gallery spaces, known as The Coach Shed, The Furnace and The Blade Factory; in May 2006, The Picket, a live music venue, found a new home in Jamaica Street, after closing due to debt; and Novas recently opened its Contemporary Urban Centre, featuring entertainment, gallery, cinema, conference, retail and office space. All of these initiatives are located in a new cultural quarter on the edge of the city centre, known as the 'Independent District', and it is these kinds of places that will give Liverpool its edge, that 'something a bit different'. However, with a lack of promotion, it is likely that only a limited amount of people are aware of their existence.

On the other hand, Liverpool also has a growing events calendar including Mersey River Festival, Mathew Street Festival, Summer Pops, Africa Oyé, Brouhaha, DaDa Fest, Homotopia, Arabic Arts Festival, Liverpool Irish Festival, Liverpool Biennial, Hub and Leap, which better reflect the city's diverse cultures. Of course, Liverpool's

European Capital of Culture year can also be seen as an event in itself. So far, criticism has been cast concerning a sense of lack of participation and involvement in relation to Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme. However, in relation to other Capitals / Cities of Culture, Liverpool had already delivered a considerable number of cultural projects before 2008 its Capital of Culture year (Impacts 08, 2007a: 47; 2009: 3). Unique to Liverpool's programme, a number of themed years were designated in order to create awareness and momentum, to encourage participation in 2008, but also to create a lasting legacy after 2008:

2003 Year of Learning

2004 Faith in One City

2005 Sea Liverpool

2006 Liverpool Performs

2007 800th birthday

2008 European Capital of Culture

2009 Environment

2010 Innovation

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 10)

Collaboration with the cultural sector is recognised as crucial to these themed years (ibid.: 20), and as such the city's cultural organisations are encouraged to develop activity in line with the relevant theme for each year.

#### **3.4.4 Social Inclusion and Community Participation**

Much of Liverpool's cultural policy emphatically refers to notions of social inclusion and community participation. The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool claims to be 'fundamentally inclusive' (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 2) and Liverpool Culture Company maintains that "Liverpool places community participation at the heart of its planning for European Capital of Culture" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 21). This emphasis on people rather than physical infrastructure is said to be driven by a belief in "Liverpool's strongest asset" – its people (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a: 9). Definitions of 'an inclusive community' appear to focus predominantly on representing ethnic diversity (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 56-57), although other excluded groups are briefly mentioned (ibid.: 59). While ethnic diversity is a defining feature of Liverpool's culture, the harsh reality of some members of the ethnic minorities living in the city is not duly acknowledged. Despite the longstanding ethnic diversity of Liverpool's population, the extent of racial segregation is possibly among

the greatest in UK cities (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: 352). Although it is recognised that "these communities have been accepted by the city to differing degrees", the problem is then reduced to the fact that "the rich cultural heritages and the contemporary expression of these heritages has not been successfully recognized or celebrated (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 56)". However, the cultural diversity which is to be celebrated is that which results "from 800 years as a world-facing port" (ibid.: 72). As such, suggestions that promotional literature referring to Liverpool's European Capital of Culture status portray a romanticised view of Liverpool as 'The World In One City', based on a tokenistic representation of the city's ethnic minorities (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: 352-353), seem quite justified. Moreover, this nostalgic view of how Liverpool's culture was formed is not necessarily culturally relevant today. First of all it ignores the level of diversity due to other factors which have more recently shaped the city, such as the influx of refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, it does not recognise the fact that Liverpool now has one of the lowest levels of ethnic diversity of any English city (Pooley, 2006: 187).

Despite the rather simplistic representation of excluded communities in some of the key cultural policy documents, there are initiatives which are actively working to create a culture of social inclusion in the city. Furthermore, the evaluation of Liverpool's Cultural Services indicates that opportunities to participate in cultural activity are improving (Audit Commission, 2006: 28). The Creative Communities programme is part of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture project and is considered to be "crucial in making sure that the promise of 'inclusive community participation' which helped the bid is now fully delivered" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a: 11). The programme claims to tackle the roots of isolation and ignorance by reaching out to excluded communities which have previously been hard to approach and demonstrating that culture is "a right for all", not just "a middle class luxury" (ibid.: 19). However, it is also recognised that the resources which are facilitating this initiative are not endless and therefore there is a need to ensure that this creative engagement is continued in a sustainable manner (ibid.: 27). Of course, the Creative Communities programme is not the first initiative to use culture and creativity as a tool for regeneration in this way. There are other organisations in the city which have been working in this way for some time.

As far as levels of interest in culture amongst Liverpool residents are concerned, these are reported to be in line with, if not slightly higher than, those in the rest of the United



Kingdom (Impacts 08, 2007a: 47; 2009: 4). Furthermore, residents' cultural participation appears to be above average (ibid.) and on the increase (Impacts 08, 2009: 4). However, a greater proportion of the audiences attending the larger cultural organisations in the city are from outside of Liverpool (Impacts 08, 2007a: 53). Events supported by the Creative Communities programme reflect an over representation of ethnic minorities and youths both in terms of participants and audience (ibid.: 2007a: 49; 2009: 4). While this is clearly an excellent achievement considering these are regarded as priority groups (Audit Commission, 2006: 21), it is also an indication that the programme might be biased towards organisations such as schools due to ease of access in terms of having a 'captive audience' (Impacts 08, 2007a: 50). Data collected in 2007, also shows an over-representation of people from lower socio-economic groups amongst audiences at Capital of Culture events (Impacts 08, 2009: 4). Nonetheless, it is difficult to ascertain the actual extent of engagement in cultural activity since many organisations do not monitor the profile of their audiences (Impacts 08, 2007a: 50-52). Furthermore, care should be taken to differentiate between engagement in Capital of Culture events and engagement in cultural activity as a whole in the city.

Reports from other organisations suggest that social exclusion is still a problem in the city. Research carried out by Novas (2003) demonstrated that respondents from Liverpool's Black and Minority Ethnic communities felt that there were a number of access issues which prevented them from becoming involved in cultural activities (ibid.: 69-72). While this research took place before the Creative Communities programme, which appears to be engaging Liverpool's BME communities to some extent, other more recent research confirms that there is an under representation of BME groups engaged in activity through the mainstream cultural organisations (Impacts 08, 2007a: 51). However, the case of BME groups is just one example of excluded communities. There is a need to consider the issue of social inclusion and regeneration from various perspectives. Munck (2003) discusses this matter in relation to Liverpool from the view point of race, gender, and age, however, socio-economic status, sexuality and physical/mental ability should also be taken into consideration. The Impacts 08 research (2007a; 2009) also appears to be bearing these factors in mind.

### **3.4.5 Capitalising on Culture?**

In light of these arguments, and despite claims that culture has predominantly been adopted as a vehicle for social reform, doubt has been cast as to whether the

economic benefits are not what the city truly has at heart. Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004: 350-351) suggest that the benefits of community cohesion which allegedly won the bid for Liverpool, and are repeatedly cited as core objectives of the programme, are being glazed over in favour of the economic impact that the European Capital of Culture title could have on the city. A key piece of their evidence is based on the report commissioned by Liverpool City Council (ERM Economics, 2003) to assess the socio-economic impact of a successful bid, before the bid was won. The report clearly states that "the primary focus of the commission was on assessing the economic impact that a successful Capital of Culture could make to the city, Merseyside and the North West region" (ibid.: 1). It does seem, on studying this allegation further, that many of the benefits of culture-led regeneration are expressed in economic terms, such as an increase in investment, jobs, and visitor numbers (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 5). Therefore, tensions "between the elite conception of cultural policy as a tool for economic growth and cultural policy as an expression of grassroots and community-based activity" (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: 343) or between the "large scale 'wow-factor' events and the need to tackle the multiple causes of deprivation" (Audit Commission, 2006: 35) clearly exist. Furthermore, while the use of culture in re-branding Liverpool may have made the city a more attractive environment to be in, it is suggested that these efforts put the needs of investors and tourists, who are more likely to add to the economy of the city, over and above those of residents. Moreover, the capitalisation of culture and regulation of cultural spaces in the city actually pose a threat to more spontaneous and diverse expressions of culture, thus redefining the culture of the city as a whole (Belchem, 2006: 56; Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: 343).

### **3.5 Tourism Policy**

#### **3.5.1 The Development of Tourism In Liverpool**

With both culture and tourism increasingly featuring on Liverpool's regeneration agenda, it is interesting to consider how they are linked and the potential issues that arise from this partnership. While the previous sections addressed some of the issues surrounding Liverpool's cultural policy, the rest of this chapter will focus on the city's tourism policy. Tourism appears increasingly as a feature of Liverpool's regeneration strategies, with the key tourism bodies in the city aiming to "increase the economic, social and environmental benefits of tourism to the Liverpool City Region and to improve the profitability of tourism businesses" (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 5). This aim is set within the context of the promotion of the Liverpool City Region as "a

great place to invest, live, work and visit" (The Mersey Partnership, 2004c: 2) and based on the principles of the virtuous circle of tourism (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 6). While 20 or 30 years ago Liverpool might not have been such a desirable tourist destination, tourism is currently at an all time high, with the international market showing the greatest growth (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 7; 2006a: 11). In 2003, Liverpool moved from 18<sup>th</sup> place to 9<sup>th</sup> in the Top UK Towns visited by international visitors, although it moved down to 16<sup>th</sup> place in 2004 (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: 11). The most recent figures from 2006 indicate that Liverpool now ranks 6<sup>th</sup> on this scale (The Mersey Partnership, 2008a: 4). Domestic tourism, although it has not seen such a rapid increase has now also reached a high (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: 11). According to research carried out in 2006, Merseyside attracted 4.22 million staying visitors (The Mersey Partnership, 2008b). The total number of staying and day visitors for 2006 is estimated at 61.6 million, generating a total value of £1.2 billion (The Mersey Partnership, 2008b). The vision for tourism in 2015 is for the Liverpool City Region to be ranked in the top 20 European City Region Destinations, generating an annual visitor spend of £2 billion and 30,000 local jobs (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: 8).

Destination benchmarking studies have been carried out in order to compile information on the origin, profile, behaviour and opinions of visitors to Liverpool (England's Northwest Research Service for Tourism and Economic Development, 2006; North West Tourist Board, 2003). These studies provide a useful starting point for gaining an insight into the profile, activity and perceptions of visitors to Liverpool. However, much of the evaluation of tourism in Liverpool appears to be of a quantitative nature. The strategic documents, for example, assess the performance of the tourism industry in terms of performance indicators based on the volume and value of tourism (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 12; 2006a: 16-19). More qualitative research would perhaps be beneficial in establishing more in-depth perceptions of Liverpool's tourism industry. This thesis will go some way to addressing this omission.

### **3.5.2 Partnerships and Collaboration**

It has been suggested that the fragmented nature of the tourism industry requires effective coordination and close collaboration in order to produce a quality tourism product (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000: 138; Page, 1995: 213). Liverpool's tourism industry appears to be built on a significant number of partnerships and a considerable amount of collaboration. In a regional, that is Northwest, context Liverpool has been

designated as an 'attack brand' in a wider strategy to attract visitors to the Northwest of England (NWDA, 2007: 15; The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 4; 26). Interestingly, the Northwest as a whole sees itself as "underperforming" in tourism (NWDA, 2007: 5), whereas the impression given of tourism in Liverpool is more positive. On a local level, however, Liverpool is defined as the attack brand, used to promote Merseyside in general (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 21). This collaboration, based on an 'attack and disperse strategy', is also evident in promotional literature. For example, the visitor guide for Liverpool is actually the 'Visitor Guide to Liverpool, Merseyside & England's Northwest' and as such includes information on other locations in Merseyside and the Northwest (The Mersey Partnership, 2005b; 2006b). Other examples of this kind of regional and local collaboration include the designation of the Mersey Waterfront as "a regional signature project" aimed at linking the waterfront through the districts of Halton, Liverpool, Wirral and Sefton (NWDA, 2007: 14; The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 8).

While in some cases the partner organisations seem to share common aims and objectives and a certain level of cooperation, there do appear, however, to be certain conflicts of interest. By way of example, the Northwest tourism strategy places emphasis on the importance of sustainable tourism, especially in relation to the environment, which implies limiting the amount of air travel (NWDA, 2007: 9). It is stated that "the majority of promotional effort will be within the UK market. This is consistent with the national strategy of promoting domestic tourism, benefiting both balance of payments and the carbon footprint" (ibid.: 15). However, for Liverpool, with Liverpool John Lennon Airport constantly expanding and with promotional campaigns increasingly focused on the international market, air travel is clearly significant to the tourism infrastructure of the city.

On a local level, coordination of the tourism industry is currently managed predominantly by two organisations, The Mersey Partnership and Liverpool Culture Company. The Mersey Partnership defines the importance of its role as follows:

- As a sub-regional public-private sector partnership, it brings to the table the leading players involved in tourism across the Liverpool City Region.
- As a sub-regional partner to the Northwest Development Agency, it can ensure that the Liverpool City Region tourism product is aligned to regional priorities and programmes.

- As the tourism marketing, investment and economic development agency for the Liverpool City Region, it is responsible for the branding and messaging about the sub-region.
- As a contributor to the Merseyside Objective One programme it can help align investment to the priorities outlined in this strategy. (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 29).

In its role as local tourism board, The Mersey Partnership states,

In pursuing the development of the targeted visitor experiences, tourism partners will adhere to some guiding principles which underpin the visitor experience and ensure tourism contributes to the wider economic development agenda of the sub-region. Similarly, there is a need to strengthen the tourism component of wider infrastructure developments in the sub-region. (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 14).

Tourism and conference activity is controlled to a certain extent through The Mersey Partnership's membership scheme, which offers its members the advantages of promotion and advertising, training and so on. Such membership schemes are useful in terms of coordinating activity and ensuring quality standards, however, this also implies that smaller organisations may not have the budget to join or may fall short of qualifying for membership based on other criteria. Also, The Mersey Partnership's remit stretches further than the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Liverpool to the whole Merseyside region. While being beneficial in the sense that this encourages cooperation on a sub-regional level, problems could also arise in terms of marketing. The strategy claims that it is not bound by the political boundaries of local authorities (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 21), but since Liverpool has a much higher brand awareness than Merseyside and since the composite districts may have different needs and priorities, this could indeed lead to some contention. The Destination Management Plan, on this point, highlights the fact that,

Merseyside is not a homogenous destination – it has two clear tourism destination brands, Liverpool and Southport, and many other products and assets that combine to make up the Merseyside tourism offer with individual strengths and issues to address. (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 8).

Liverpool Culture Company, as discussed earlier, is responsible for the city's European Capital of Culture programme. That tourism in Liverpool will benefit from this designation is undisputed (Impacts08, 2007a: 21-22). However, evidence that publicity in the national press has not referred to Liverpool's increasing appeal to tourist and

conference markets in light of its European Capital of Culture status (ibid.: 68) is perhaps suggestive of a lack of tourism promotion for Liverpool at national level. This is also slightly concerning considering the intention of Liverpool Culture Company to reposition Liverpool through an increase in leisure and business tourism. It is also quite concerning that much of Liverpool's tourism planning is now focused around this designation, as the Destination Management Plan clearly states, "The Strategic Objectives for this Destination Management Plan.....are built around Liverpool's designation as European Capital of Culture in 2008 and the opportunities and challenges this provides over the next four years."

There are four key strategic objectives:

- To develop a class destination for conferences and business visits
- To promote the Liverpool City Region as a world-class destination for leisure tourism
- To develop the sub-region as a major events destination of international repute
- To deliver a warm Liverpool Welcome throughout the City Region

(The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 6)

In fact, a considerable amount of restructuring has taken place as a result of Liverpool's winning bid, with Liverpool City Council's tourism activity being transferred to Liverpool Culture Company, and with the redistribution of activities between The Mersey Partnership and Liverpool Culture Company, especially the transferral of the city's Tourist Information Centres to the latter (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 9).

### **3.5.3 Marketing Liverpool and Merseyside**

The tourism offer is analysed in terms of core products and experiences, developing products and experiences and associated target markets. Culture has been selected as one of the Liverpool City Region's core products which indicates a certain level of collaboration between the local tourism and cultural industries (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 19-20; 2005a: 13). While this thematic approach reflects a customer oriented strategy and to a certain extent the diversity of experience offered by a destination such as Liverpool, it risks compartmentalising the interplay of experiences which the destination produces. Although place consumers may have one main motive in visiting, they are bound to experience a cross-section of products, services, people and events, some of which will not be controlled by the destination marketing agents. Having said this, the strategy recognises that a holistic approach is needed, and that

therefore, although gaps exist in the product, the focus needs to be directed at developing the overall customer journey. As such, an initiative known as 'The Liverpool Welcome' has been devised to improve customer service, access and transport, the attractiveness of the tourist environment, and information services (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 14; 2006a: 27). The Liverpool Welcome concept will be "the glue that binds much of the investment together" (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: 26). The Destination Management Plan pays considerable attention to the importance of a skilled workforce for the success of a tourism destination and highlights the concern that providers are having difficulty recruiting chefs, food and room service staff, with migrant workers accounting for over 50% of the workforce in some cases (ibid.: 27). Therefore, more effort needs to be concentrated on raising the profile of tourism jobs, promoting them as a career, not just a stop-gap.

More generally, key to the strategy for the Liverpool City Region and the strategy for the Northwest which impinges upon it, are the concepts of excellence, quality, experience, customer orientation and the visitor economy (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 16-17; 25; NWDA, 2007: 4). In order to compete among an ever increasing number of potential destinations, each location has to demonstrate that they are providing a whole experience, not just a commodity, which is tailored to the consumer's needs and which is, in short, the best.

#### **3.5.4 Social Inclusion and Tourism for All**

As well as featuring in Liverpool's cultural strategy, social inclusion is an issue which is addressed in relation to tourism in the city. In investing so much in the places of tourism and the people who visit them, it is argued that a large investment is being made in the residents of the destination as well. "Indeed it is ultimately their interests that are paramount, since it is for their economic and social well being that we are working", it is claimed (NWDA, 2007: 6). While tourism can clearly be beneficial to the social, environmental and economic regeneration of places, this slightly debatable statement overestimates the extent to which tourism initiatives of this sort can positively affect the economic status and social well being of individuals living in the city. Other writers have also questioned the role of place marketing in increasing the fortunes of local citizens. The notion of "the battle of the growth machines" as discussed by Munck (2003: 10, drawing on Molotch and Logan, 1985: 144), is evident in the various tourism documents. Solely from the terminology used in the title, "*The Liverpool City Region, Winning Tourism for England's North West*" (The Mersey Partnership, 2003, emphasis

added), there is a resonance of this. The result is, as Munck (2003: 10) describes, "Competition between places seems to take over from competition to boosting its local fortunes against other cities." However, in the long term the extent to which this battle actually benefits the destination socially or environmentally is uncertain. While those responsible for the development of tourism claim to be doing so in the name of some kind of social reform, there are indications that priority is given to developments that "have the greatest potential for increasing the economic value of tourism." (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 19).

Another observation which can be made from these strategies is that there is a focus on the image of the destination. There is constant mention of the role of perceptions and the attractiveness of the environment in relation to regeneration. While positive image can play a role in attracting visitors and creating local pride, in itself it is resonant of superficial change rather than fundamental social change. It also appears that in Liverpool the main focus of tourism promotion is directed towards the city's physical attractions. While the key festivals in the city do provide a meeting point for tourism and local creative and cultural activity, the less publicised and more informal activity does not appear to be connected to the tourism offer of the city. Tourism could be coordinated with current cultural initiatives in order to make a sustainable, socially inclusive, tourism offer.

Furthermore, while one of the guiding principles upon which both Liverpool's tourism strategy and that for the Northwest are based is "access for all" / "tourism for all" (NWDA, 2007: 9; The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 17), no indication is given as to the action which will be taken to ensure that these principles are adopted. While some initiatives referred to elsewhere in the documents could be seen as encouraging social inclusion and welcoming diversity, they do not necessarily actively engage people in the experiences which the tourism industry is offering, but include them as a representation of this. The Mersey Champions programme, based on the strength of word-of mouth recommendation, encourages local residents and satisfied visitors to act as ambassadors for the area (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 6). For residents, while this initiative helps to engender pride, their role appears to be "welcoming and helping visitors" rather than engaging in the same activity as tourists themselves. In a similar vein, in reference to the tourism benefits which have been accrued through Liverpool's European Capital of Culture status, the tourism strategy refers to the opportunities presented for the city's minority populations "to celebrate their own cultures and their



part in the wider fabric of Liverpool" as representatives of "The World In One City" (ibid. 5). However, again this is suggestive of the polarisation between tourist activity and that of various socio-cultural groups within the city. While it is a positive move to encourage local cultural groups to express their cultural background in this way, it tends to be the elements of culture which can be used to put on a show that are celebrated, rather than people's everyday culture. Furthermore, it still does not facilitate access for excluded groups to cultural venues and activities which at the moment they see as irrelevant or inaccessible.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

After analysing a range of documents, it would be fair to say that while Liverpool's cultural and tourism initiatives are increasingly drawing on the concepts of public participation and social inclusion, there is still some way to go to ensure that these are policies which are embedded in long-term strategies with sustainable outcomes. It is also crucial that these initiatives take into account the culture of Liverpool as it is, not as it was or as it is perceived or hoped to be. While it would be naïve to expect tourism and cultural initiatives to cure all urban ills, there is evidence that real engagement with people can achieve positive results.

Although the tourism bodies in Liverpool have placed culture on their agenda, their definition of culture appears to be significantly narrower than that of some of the cultural organisations. The former seem to concentrate on fixed notions of culture and cultural products which can be packaged to appeal to more affluent markets and therefore result in more spending. What the strategic documents seem to overlook is the informal production of culture; culture, not as something to be packaged or sold or turned into a show or exhibition, but culture as subconscious or semi-conscious practices.

The cultural organisations, or some at least, are attempting to encourage wider cultural consumption by highlighting lived cultures, which are more relevant to the everyday. However, in tourism, there seems to be a polarity between the production and consumption of culture. Combining the more informal cultural activity in the city with tourism initiatives would be a way of providing a more sustainable and inclusive tourism offer. However, it appears that for the moment a gap exists between the aims of Liverpool's cultural and tourism strategies and actual practice.

Finally, it remains to point out that the observations that have been made in this chapter are based on the impressions created by the documents consulted. However, these findings will be reconsidered in the course of the following chapters, taking into account the views of a broad sample of informants. This approach is in keeping with the dialectical method upon which this thesis is based. The next chapter, on methodology, will explain in more detail the process of analysis which resulted in the findings of this chapter and the relevance of these findings to the thesis as a whole.

#### **Note**

<sup>1</sup> The cultural sector is defined as "tourism, sports, heritage and the creative industries" by Liverpool Culture Company (2005b:6).

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to relate the theoretical concepts discussed in the previous chapters to the philosophical approach that underpins this thesis. Attention will be given to the sample, research methods and analysis techniques used, and the justification for each of these.

### **4.2 Research Design: The Philosophical Underpinning**

In the initial stages of the research design, one of the main methodological problems encountered was the fact that, in theoretical terms, urban tourism and the consumption of culture can be considered from a number of perspectives and in some cases cannot be detached from other fields from which they have derived, namely, sociology, anthropology and economics. Therefore, due to the multidisciplinary nature of the subject matter, several questions arose. More specifically, in conceptualising urban tourism there was an overlap between issues of urbanism on the one hand and tourism on the other. Therefore it had to be decided where the line was to be drawn between the two. Equally, the distinction between tourism and leisure had to be considered. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, these concepts and the practices associated with them should be considered in relation to each other. Therefore the research design did not treat these as independent concepts, but allowed for them to be defined through the research findings. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of the consumption of culture was considered particularly crucial to the outcome of the research; therefore it was important to clarify how culture was to be defined.

The question of what constitutes culture has been the subject of a vast and complex field of intellectual enquiry and debate within the social and human sciences generally and in sociology and anthropology specifically for many years. In these latter disciplines, culture is variously defined within a broad frame of culture as symbolic reality. In Wuthnow *et al.* (1984: 259), for instance, "cultural analysis may be defined as the study of the symbolic-expressive dimension of life." Previous to this, culture has also been conceptualised within a symbolic framework by eminent anthropologists such as Geertz (1975:89), Leach (1976:9), Levi-Strauss (1968; 1977) and others, and by sociologists such as Parsons (1966: 5). Although the conceptualisation of the consumption of culture concerning this study falls within such a symbolic context, it

would not be fitting to employ any of these broad symbolist definitions for analytical purposes here. To limit, on the other hand, the definition of culture to "the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity" or "culture as product" (Richards, 1996: 264-265), would have confined the research to specific cultural institutions, but then defining culture as a common way of life or "culture as process" (ibid.), would perhaps have overlooked some of the stimuli involved in the act of consumption. It was important for the conceptualisation of the consumption of culture to also be considered in an experiential and dynamic context rather than a purely symbolic one. It was decided, therefore, not to adopt a specific narrow or broad definition of culture as such but to consider how the boundaries of the above mentioned concepts merged both in theoretical and practical terms, as has been indicated in the previous chapter. Thus, an inclusive, dialectical approach was adopted so as not to exclude relevant issues but to allow the answers to these questions to emerge from the data itself, namely from the ways the place consumers interacted with specific cultural products, structures and situations.

As indicated above, the consumption of culture could not be studied in isolation from the structures from within which it was borne, and as such a discursive approach was considered particularly useful. The research design, then, is based on the premise that the dualisms of production and consumption and structure and agency are not polar opposites but represent interrelated processes. Structure can be understood as the forces which shape human action whereas agency refers to the capacity of humans to act independently of these forces. These two social phenomena have sometimes been considered as representing conflicting theoretical positions. However, if we return to the meaning of consumption as discussed in the previous chapter we see how from a purely structuralist point of view consumption is understood simply as a functional process. If we consider how structure and agency interact though, this ontological assumption is rejected and consumption is also defined as symbolic and interactive. Therefore, this thesis is based on the premise that there exists a dialectic relationship between structure and agency or society and the 'individual', since the one influences the other, a view which has been convincingly supported in the past (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, Mead, 1934; Winch, 1958;) and also more recently (Bourdieu, 1990; 2000; Giddens, 1984). In repudiating the academic position that "action is the mechanical effect of the constraint of external causes" (Bourdieu, 2000:138) or that the agent always acts consciously and by will, Bourdieu demonstrates how,

The principle of action is therefore neither a subject confronting the world as an object in a relation of pure knowledge nor a 'milieu' exerting a form of mechanical causality on the agent.....It lies in the complicity between two states of the social, between history in bodies and history in things, or, more precisely, between the history objectified in the form of structures and mechanisms (those of the social space or of fields) and the history incarnated in bodies in the form of habitus.... (2000: 150-1)

Furthermore, Bourdieu's notion of habitus, while conferring an active role upon the agent, and thus rejecting structuralism in its purest form, recognizes that this ability "is not that of a transcendental subject but of a socialized body, investing in its practice socially constructed organizing principles that are acquired in the course of a situated and dated social experience" (Bourdieu, 2000:136-7). In this context, Piaget (1971:121-125) has also convincingly argued that structuralism always entails constructivism.

While emphasising the dialectical nature of structure and agency is not a particularly new approach in sociological studies, its application within urban tourism research is relatively novel. Therefore, what perhaps needs to be drawn out more clearly here from this theoretical perspective, if we are referring to the urban tourist landscape, is that there is a network of structures and agents which forms the experience of the landscape. More specifically, there are both social and physical structures, which impact on the experience of the place consumer, and the former, the social, is often embodied in the latter, the physical. However, the experience and actions of the place consumer also have an impact on the physical and social structures of the landscape. In this sense the place consumer is at the same time a consumer and a producer of culture. Furthermore, culture can be understood as a social structure itself since it is "both the product of human interaction and the producer of certain forms of human interaction" (Hays, 1994: 65). Therefore, culture, structure and agency are inextricably linked through the consumption of culture in the urban tourist landscape.

Although the focus of the project was the study of place consumers, for the reasons stated earlier, this population could not be studied in isolation from the context of their activity, Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, or the mediators of their experience, in other words, the organisations and establishments involved in the structuring and planning of the urban tourist landscape. The physical structure of the landscape is connected to the place consumers whose actions give it meaning and also to the service providers and organisational bodies that also shape it and confer meaning upon it. Therefore, the physical landscape does not exist independently from the social

structures within it, whether these be service providers, place consumers or some other social group, but is created and made meaningful through these. The existence of diverse social groups with different and sometimes competing agendas suggests that various social structures and actors work alongside each other. There is no one single group or individual acting as an external constraint. Agency comes from within the structure itself. Furthermore, this implies that the physical landscape and its representation as a product for consumption, does not entirely determine place consumers' actions and experiences. While it provides a structure for them to act within, their actions can speak against its intended purpose and meaning. Tourist landscapes are cultural places; structures and objects which speak to the consumer as the consumer speaks back to them. Place consumers thus left unimpressed or indifferent by what they experience, 'vote with their feet' so to speak. It is by the quality and degree of intensity of experience effected on the place consumer that a tourist landscape gains its reputation and, of course, its cultural and economic dynamic. This is not to say that the place consumer is totally free to act at will or that there may not be deep unconscious structures and values operative at the interactive level between agency and structure, but even at this level the participation of place consumers cannot be conceived as totally passive.

Given these observations, it would be difficult to define this research under the label of one particular philosophical paradigm; rather, it is underpinned by strands of structuralism and phenomenology which at some point intersect. Structuralism is pertinent in that we are concerned with the social structures within which experience of the urban tourist landscape takes place. However, phenomenology also has a bearing on this research question, in particular its association with the perception of the world as seen through everyday human experience. More specifically, the study falls within a research framework known as discourse theory (Parker, 1991; Wetherell et al., 2001; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). It must be stressed, however, that this study does not employ discourse analysis in the strict technical sense. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000:205) point out that "[d]iscourse analysis claims that through language people engage in constructing the social world". However, they add that,

...we regard an exclusive focus on language use and speech acts as altogether too narrow an approach. If we constrain our research in this way, important (and admittedly difficult) questions are left unanswered. If all foci apart from the linguistic are excluded, there is a risk of the research becoming trivialized. Many crucial issues simply disappear. (ibid.: 207).

The approach to this research is in full agreement with these points. Furthermore it is to be differentiated from Foucault's (1980; 1982) theory of discourse in the context of power relations and power structures. Although issues of power are relevant to the study, firstly, in terms of questioning the empowerment of the place consumer and their choices in the consumption process (Shankar *et al.*, 2006) and, secondly, in relation to issues surrounding the socio-cultural construction of space and the extent to which the place consumer plays an active role in the production of the space around them (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000), the ideology of the dominant versus the subordinate is perhaps too restrictive a line to follow. In adopting a discursive dialectical methodology this research aimed at exploring real broad issues at play beyond a narrow sociolinguistic framework or an exclusively power based discourse theory. Above all it took care to avoid reductionism and conformity to any specific methodological model.

#### **4.2.1 Sample**

The holistic approach adopted in the research design necessitated a number of different samples and methods to be used. In brief, these included semi-structured interviews with service providers, participant observation of place consumers, semi-structured interviews with place consumers and archival research. I will first provide details of the sampling process and then explain the methods used in more depth.

##### *The Service Provider Sample*

The views of service providers were considered necessary in order to gain a deeper understanding of the context of cultural production and the sources of cultural experiences which may impact upon consumption. The sampling frame included various agents connected to the tourism and leisure and cultural sectors within Liverpool. Although a number of the respondents' remits stretched beyond Liverpool city centre and some even across Merseyside, these respondents were incorporated on the basis of their influence on the tourism and cultural provision within the city centre. A snowball sample was used to recruit respondents and was initiated by identifying service providers who clearly played a major role in the management and development of the tourism and leisure and cultural sectors. The recruitment process varied since sometimes a specific contact had been recommended in which case the person in question would be contacted to request their participation. In most instances this was successful. In other cases, a specific organisation was proposed but it was then necessary to identify the relevant contact within the organisation which was often

a more complex and time-consuming process. The snowball method was selected over others since it was believed that those working within the industry were likely to have a greater awareness of who the most relevant and influential stakeholders were, whereas other methods may have led to the exclusion of crucial stakeholders. However, care was taken to ensure that the broadest possible range of aspects of the industry and associated issues were reflected in the sample. For further details of the constitution of the sample see the 'Research Methods' section and also Appendix B, and for the methodological procedures followed see the 'Research Methods' section.

### *The Place Consumer Sample*

Although authors such as Page (1995: 228) emphasise the need to evaluate and monitor tourist target markets, what perhaps is really called for is a deeper understanding of urban consumer behaviour and the range of place consumers. In the academic world, consumption practice has often been 'assumed' as opposed to being empirically investigated through the experiences of consumers themselves (Ateljevic, 2000:375). Thus, actual consumers need to be stopped in their tracks to understand the real experiences urban tourism consumption generates. Situated within its actual social context, consumer behaviour can be better comprehended, since expectations and perceptions are based on previous experiences and current knowledge (Selby, 2004b: 193-4). Therefore, "explaining the consumption of tourist services cannot be separated off from the social relations within which they are embedded" (Urry, 1995: 129). Apart from tourists, the views and experiences of residents and other users of the central urban space, even if they were not intentional consumers of a specific tourism product, were considered significant since tourism development has a great impact on their everyday existence (Bramwell, 1998: 37) and they are in effect visitors to the city centre, sharing the same facilities as tourists. Therefore, the sample of place consumers did not intentionally exclude any particular consumer group, apart from minors, who were excluded on ethical grounds, since it would not have been possible to gain informed consent. As such, for the purposes of this research, place consumers were defined as adults, whether residents or visitors, who happened to be passing through the location in question, irrespective of their reason for being there. The focus of the study, therefore, was not specifically the consumption patterns of tourists but those of the range of place consumers, intentionally or incidentally interacting with Liverpool's urban tourist landscape and its various cultural elements.



In a sense all the place consumers interviewed could be classed as 'visitors' since they all chose for one reason or another to visit a particular part of the urban tourist landscape. Hence, to avoid confusion, place consumers will be used to refer to anyone using the urban tourist landscape in some way. I use the term 'visitors', on the other hand, to distinguish between those place consumers who came from outside the local area and those who lived within it. Here, to use the term 'tourist' to refer to all non-residents would be inaccurate since although they had all travelled from outside the local area, not all of them engaged in tourist activity. Furthermore, following Urry's (1990) line of thought that we are tourists much of the time, it could be argued that some residents could be classed as tourists. However, still, having defined these terms, deciding which place consumers constituted residents and which visitors, was quite problematic. It was necessary to decide where the 'local' boundary lay. Certain geographical features such as the River Mersey, which separates Liverpool from the Wirral, for example, could have been used as markers to delineate this boundary, as could the geographical boundary of the City of Liverpool. However, the problem is that most of these boundaries represent jurisdictional boundaries, which divide the wider urban area into smaller geographical areas but in essence, the place consumers within these different areas share the same core urban area, Liverpool city centre that is. It was decided that residents would be classed as those living in the area referred to, for jurisdictional purposes, as the Liverpool City region or Greater Merseyside. This area includes the Metropolitan Boroughs of Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley, St. Helens, Halton and the City of Liverpool itself. 'Visitors' would refer to place consumers travelling from outside this area.

Another consideration to be made regarding the place consumer sample was the area or areas which comprised the urban tourist landscape. A purposive sample, initially based on four key locations within the city, was selected on the basis that the chosen sites and the consumers to be found there were appropriate to the aims of the research. Since data collection was to be carried out outdoors, there had to be a convenient spot at each location where the research subjects but also the researcher could feel at ease in terms of personal safety, having somewhere to sit and somewhere to take shelter if necessary. The sites needed to be representative of the different range of activities, facilities, consumers and social milieus that constitute Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. As such, the sites included the Waterfront, due to its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, its wide range of attractions and its symbolic

associations with the city; the Cavern Quarter, representative of Beatles tourism and Liverpool nightlife; Hope Street Quarter, including the two cathedrals and a selection of theatres, pubs and restaurants; and Queen Square, representing visitors to the Tourist Information Centre, museums and galleries, theatres and shops. After piloting the study, however, it was found that Queen Square, linked two distinct areas of activity and from here alone it was not possible to monitor the full range of activity. Therefore, Queen Square, together with Williamson Square and Clayton Square were chosen to represent the main retail area of the city centre and the 'Cultural Quarter' which houses the city's library and some of the main museums and theatres was to be an additional location, making five locations in total. Aside from the activities and facilities which each of these locations encompassed, they were chosen according to the different social milieus which they represented. Of course each location is not consumed exclusively by a particular consumer group, but to some extent there are certain social groups associated with particular locations. The Waterfront and the Albert Dock, in particular, are associated with leisure-oriented consumers, of fairly high socio-economic status, due to the nature of the attractions based there; the Cavern Quarter is highly frequented by Beatles tourists, but in local terms is more associated with the night time economy of the city; Hope Street Quarter is connected with the student population but also the 'creatives' and professionals of the city; the Cultural Quarter is associated with leisure visitors, again of fairly high socio-economic status; and finally, the Retail Quarter, while possibly the most heterogeneous, has in parts, such as Williamson Square, more 'popular' associations. For a map of the areas where research was carried out, see Appendix A.

There were other areas of the city centre which were not included in the sample, for example the Ropewalks area including Chinatown and Concert Square, and the London Road area. This was partly due to logistic reasons, since incorporating more areas would have required extending the timeframe of the project, but also because the facilities, activities and place consumers to be found here were considered to be already represented in other locations, and thus adding these extra locations would not necessarily have added to the quality and depth of the findings.

The investigation and comparison of different areas of urban centres is an approach which has received minimal attention (Pearce, 1998), especially in relation to the complex networks implicit in urban tourism. This approach was chosen for its ability to encapsulate the variety of activity in the city centre but also the role of the place

consumer in the construction of the identity of specific locations. In fact two different samples of place consumers were taken from this sampling frame, but using different methods, as will be explained in further detail below. Once again, for further details of the constitution of the sample see the 'Research Methods' section and also Appendix B and for the methodological procedures followed see the 'Research Methods' section.

The dialectics of the production and consumption of culture and the urban tourist landscape discussed earlier had a particular bearing on the sampling process. The research design is based on the notion of culture as dialogue, as a process of exchange. Therefore the consumption of culture in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape cannot be viewed in isolation from the dialectic relationship or 'circuit of culture' (Hall, 1997) which exists between the producers, consumers and objects of consumption which all feed into the culture of the city. The encounter between the place consumer and the 'product' is a dynamic process. The place consumer is not passive since in their interpretation of their surroundings, which involves both conscious and unconscious reactions, they are involved in the re(production) of culture. Therefore consumers play a role both in the consumption and production of culture. This position has more recently been strongly supported in relation to the consumption of tourism by Ateljevic (2000), who argues that the "production/consumption dichotomy", originating from the "polarization of economy and culture", needs to be reconciled.

The research design is also in keeping with the nature of urban tourism which encompasses a whole range of services, products, producers and consumers and therefore tries to take into account the widest range of actors involved in the production and consumption of Liverpool's urban tourism experience. For this reason a wide range of agents related to the tourism and leisure industry, such as service providers, policy makers, managers and artists, were sampled. For the same reason visitors and residents were included in the sample. In this way, it was hoped that as many different uses and users of the space could be identified. It has been argued that "multiple readings of local residents while working, living, playing or, in other words, consuming and producing their localities through encounter with tourism should be explored and revealed." (ibid.: 382). Nonetheless, other studies on urban tourism have often overlooked this multi-dimensional and dynamic aspect of the urban tourism experience by focusing purely on visitors.

## **4.3 Research Methods**

### **4.3.1 The Qualitative Approach**

It is evident from the social science literature that research into social phenomena raises complex theoretical and methodological issues, which are endemic in the specificity of the subject matter itself. The research, therefore, was approached from a qualitative perspective since the underlying rationale of this approach appears more compatible with the subject and nature of the research. The literature on qualitative research methods in the social sciences is now extensive and highly respectable but for the purposes of this study, Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000), Berg (1998), Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Silverman (2001) seem particularly relevant from a methodological point of view. Based on an interpretive approach of inquiry, the methodology of this research maintains that,

...unlike animals or physical objects, human beings are able to attach meaning to the events and phenomena that surround them, and from these interpretations and perceptions select courses of meaningful action which they are able to reflect upon and monitor (Gill and Johnson, 1991: 126).

More specifically, it has been argued that the use of quantitative methods in tourism research has failed to illuminate the subtleties of the processes of tourism and as such tourism has largely been treated independently from the strands of social, political and economic activity which are deeply entwined within it (Ateljevic, 2000).

Qualitative research has often been criticised for being perhaps too subjective. Scientific activity, however, cannot be considered as completely 'objective' or 'value-free' (Gill and Johnson, 1991: 8). There are always present, what Gouldner (1973: 3-26) refers to as "background assumptions". No piece of research is value-free as simply by selecting the topic, the researcher is investing in it and therefore imposing his/her own values on it. These observations, however, should not be taken to mean that qualitative methods lack objectivity. On the contrary, by taking the actor's meaning into account, they present a more authentic view of reality. Therefore it is important to devise a methodology which can ascertain what is real and of concern in the eyes and language of subjects themselves (Selby, 2004b: 194). Furthermore, "in order to understand, the researcher must partake, must engage in the subjective, must immerse themselves in an experience as well as measure and observe from a neutral point" (Ryan, 1995:11). In the same way that the population studied is characterised by emotions, attitudes and feelings which the researcher observes, the emotions and

feelings of the researcher play a role and a legitimate part in the observation process. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000:217) emphasise this point by quoting Jaggar (1989:2):

Just as observation directs, shapes, and partially defines emotion, so too emotion directs, shapes and even partially defines observation. Observation is not simply a passive process of absorbing impressions or recording stimuli; instead, it is an activity of selection and interpretation. What is selected and how it is interpreted are influenced by emotional attitudes. On the level of the individual observation, this influence has always been apparent to common sense, which notes that we remark very different features of the world when we are happy, depressed, fearful, or confident.

How our emotions and also our identities become "entangled" in the research process is an issue which is increasingly addressed in the emerging body of literature relating to reflexive methodologies (Harris *et al.*, 2007). Here it is argued that through acknowledging how our own position within the research we carry out may influence the research setting and outcomes, we are able to take a step back and provide more critical accounts of how knowledge is produced.

Another point to be noted regarding the issue of subjectivity is that each individual has a different experience. Relating this specifically to the consumption of culture, we must remember that there is no 'cultural totality' (MacCannell, 1999:25) but that cultures are many. The experience of each tourist or visitor, therefore, is unique, and thus, in this sense research is of its essence subjective (Ryan, 1995:9). However, while the reality of each individual is unique and by which, knowledge of reality is in effect a social construction (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:13) in examining a number of individual cases, patterns can be identified and so research of this nature can achieve an objective consensus, which arises from the dialectic between intersubjective patterns and structures embodied in the urban tourist landscape. However, it is important to remember that within the 'group', the individual's subjectivity still stands (Ryan, 1995:9).

#### **4.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Service Providers**

Initially, focus groups had been considered as a suitable method for this stage of the research since they would allow for in-depth exploration of the issues relating to culture and tourism in Liverpool. Also, the interaction of respondents could have a synergistic effect (Ryan, 1995:118), therefore producing a dynamic discussion. However, this method was later dismissed for two reasons. Firstly, I felt that because I wanted the

sample to include a broad range of respondents, who would possibly have quite diverse agendas and perspectives, there was a risk that individual opinions may not get voiced. Secondly, I expected that trying to find a convenient time that would suit a number of people with busy schedules might prove difficult. In retrospect, it was probably a realistic assumption, given that it was often quite a challenge just to arrange one interview.

Eventually, in-depth interviews were chosen instead because they were considered most compatible with the nature of the research question. Interviews are conducive to the acquisition of more in-depth material and allow respondents to develop their personal account of the situation in question (McCall and Simmons, 1969:19-24; Oppenheim, 1992: 67). The interview method was also selected on the strength of the advantages of face-to-face communication (Oppenheim, 1992: 102) and the building of rapport (ibid.: 89-90) which could be used to check the reliability of respondents' comments. The interview agenda (see Appendix A) was semi-structured to provide a certain amount of consistency but also to allow scope to develop important points which arose. The questions were based on a number of themes including the profile of the organisation and its policies and strategies, the organisation's role in Liverpool's tourism and leisure/cultural industry, the impact of the organisation's services on the place consumer, the respondent's image of Liverpool, the respondent's attitude towards Liverpool's tourism and leisure attractions, and the respondent's conceptualisation of culture and of Liverpool as a cultural city.

Initially five interviews were carried out to ensure that the questions were suitable and could be comprehended and that they covered all relevant themes. After this pilot study certain categories of questions were reordered to improve the flow of the interview. Subsequently a further 11 interviews were carried out. Although initially it had been thought that 20 interviews would be required, a total of 16 was found to be sufficient for the purposes of this phase of the project. These were carried out from Spring 2005 to Spring 2006. The interviews took place at the organisations' premises and before the start of the interview the respondent was reminded of the purpose of the research and the procedure which would follow. Informed consent was given in writing and orally and the respondent was ensured that discretion would be used in reproducing the interview material. For this purpose respondents were asked to indicate if something was not to be directly attributed to them. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was recorded on a voice recorder so that it could be recalled and transcribed.

### **4.3.3 Participant Observation**

The reasoning behind the use of participant observation was twofold. Firstly, it enabled me to observe the dynamics of the research setting independently of the interpretations of individual place consumers and, secondly, it allowed familiarisation with the environmental and social context which was to be investigated, by me adopting the role of a consumer of the various locations, and thus gaining an understanding of the views of the research subjects.

While the ethical implications of observing the general public were recognised, in this particular instance, observation was not considered as particularly intrusive since the researcher was not concerned with individuals but with the social collectivity of each location and as such there was a large degree of anonymity. There was little question of the subjects observed being disrupted in this particular case since no attempt was made to build up relationships with individuals and as such they remained anonymous. Another ethical issue implicit in the use of participant observation is the degree of objectivity attainable as a result of the researcher's familiarity with the research setting and those observed within it (May, 2001: 149; Ryan, 1995: 100-1). However, participant observation is recognised as using techniques "least likely to lead to researchers imposing their own reality on the social world they seek to understand" (May, 2001: 149), since it aims not to disrupt the balance of the social setting, it enables a holistic, contextualised understanding and it allows researchers to understand meanings from the participants' perspective (Denscombe, 1998: 148-9; May, 2001: 148-9). Familiarisation with the setting, rather than a possible bias, was in fact considered a necessary advantage in order to gain an insight into patterns of consumption which subsequent accounts given by individual place consumers would not have been able to achieve. The strength of participant observation as a method in itself, then, was that it allowed certain details and subtleties of consumers' experiences to be understood which may not have come to light through interviewing alone. However, it was also used to identify issues and themes to be further explored in the interviews. As will be discussed in more detail further on, interviewing in turn enhanced the meaning of what had been previously observed. The advantage of this methodological approach, whereby one method informs the other has been supported by other authors, such as Whyte (1984:96) who states, "observation guides us to some of the important questions we want to ask the respondent, and interviewing helps us to interpret the significance of what we are observing."

Observation was carried out from May to August 2005 for logistical reasons since the empirical research was to take place outside and therefore the weather conditions would be most suitable during this period. Ideally the sample would have been drawn from different periods throughout the year to take into account the seasonality of tourism but since this wasn't logistically possible, the peak period was considered more likely to capture a broader profile of consumers (Ryan, 1995:173). In addition, it was decided that spreading data collection over a number of months at different times of the day and the week would increase the validity of the sample. For this reason, a plan was drawn up to ensure that each location would be observed for the same amount of time at different times of the day and week.

The set typologies often associated with participant observation (Gans, 1968, in Bryman, 2004a: 302; Gold, 1958, in Bryman, 2004a: 301-2; in May, 2001:155-7; in Ryan, 1995:99) were not particularly useful in describing my role in this part of the research, since this varied along the spectrum from complete observer to complete participant. Participation, however, did not involve intentional social contact with other participants but entailed acting as a visitor to the various locations rather than an observant researcher. Subjects were observed to ascertain how they interact with their surroundings and to formulate some idea of factors which influence their experiences. The aim of the exercise was not to observe specific individuals throughout the duration of their visit but to observe passers-by to ascertain who (individuals, groups, families, etc.) consumes the particular sites and whether particular patterns of activity and reactions to specific elements of the environment occur. For example whether people talked, stopped to look at their surroundings or visited at particular times. The observations were recorded in the form of a log (see Appendix A) including the activity taking place and any general observations. These were later transcribed into MS Word files to create a more permanent record of the activity in each location which could then be analysed.

Although, through the above description, the observation process may sound quite straightforward, the actual procedure was more representative of the messy nature of qualitative research, as documented by Harris *et al.* (2007). So, while my primary motive in carrying out observation was to do research, I was often aware of different aspects of my identity and emotions which emerged in addition to that of a researcher. By way of example, initially, during the first few observation sessions in particular and



especially when I was observing more than participating, I often felt quite self-conscious as if I was the one being observed. I was concerned that people would wonder what I was doing and maybe think I was rather strange. This kind of reflection represented a dialogue between the subjective and objective; between my presence and that of those I was observing. Another instance when I was particularly aware of my own subjectivity relates to an incident which I mention in more detail in chapter 7, where a group of teenage boys engaged in conversation with me. At first, I found them quite entertaining, but as the incident then became more prolonged, I became aware that I was a young woman sat in the midst of a group of boys who were drinking alcohol and that there were not really many other people around. Although I had not in any way intentionally engaged with them, my own presence and identity had clearly resulted in this interaction. A further example of how my own subjectivity became apparent through the course of observation relates to the length of time the observation sessions lasted. In my observation schedule I had devised three hour periods of observation at any one time. While often I was quite happy to watch what was going on, sometimes, especially if I was not participating in a specific activity apart from observation or was not accompanied by someone I knew, observation turned into quite a solitary (although I was usually in the midst of people) and tiresome activity. This led me to conclude that I could have reduced the length of observation periods and, as a result, minimised these negative effects.

While I did not systematically record these feelings and observations in my field notes, I often went home when I had finished observing and reflected on how my own subjectivity had entered into the research process in the ways described above. I found this reflective and reflexive process useful in that it represented a "critical self-exploration" of my interpretations (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:6).

#### **4.3.4 Semi-structured Interviews with Place Consumers**

For this phase of the research, the possibility of using a questionnaire had been explored. The advantage of using this method was considered to be the ability to draw on a larger sample of respondents. However, after some deliberation, I decided that producing a large number of quantifiable responses was not as crucial to the aims of the research as obtaining richness and depth of information. Therefore, a questionnaire was not particularly suitable. In-depth interviews, on the other hand, could still be used to elicit quite basic information but also more involved responses. So, the rationale for interviewing the place consumers was much the same as with the service providers;

mainly the ability of respondents to develop their personal narratives thus providing a deeper understanding of their relationship with Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. The interview agenda (see Appendix A) was semi-structured for the reasons mentioned previously. It was also necessary to allow for some variation in the questions posed since, for example, visitors and residents visiting patterns to Liverpool city centre were bound to differ. The questions were based on the respondents' motives for visiting both Liverpool city centre and the specific location within the city centre where they were encountered, their visiting patterns, their attitudes towards Liverpool as a tourist destination, their general image of the city and their conceptualisation of culture and of Liverpool as a cultural city. Some socio-demographic questions were also added to the end of the interview agenda to create a profile of the respondents. This socio-demographic data was intended to give an insight into the range of place consumers and to contextualise respondents' views in relation to their own personal identities. It was not intended to make any assertions about the population of the sample location as a whole.

The interviews were to take place in the same 5 locations that had been observed the previous year. A plan was drawn up to ensure that an equal number of respondents would be sampled from each of the locations and that these would also be equally distributed through various times of the day and week. A total of 100 interviews were carried out, 20 in each location, although a pilot study comprising 2 interviews in each of the 5 locations was first carried out to ensure the feasibility of the interview process and the suitability of the questions. Since the size of the population in each location could not be known, it was not possible to obtain a totally random sample, however the possibility of bias was reduced by selecting every 5<sup>th</sup> passer-by. On being approached, potential respondents would be informed of the purpose of the research. If they accepted, which the majority did, the research procedure was explained in more detail and the respondents were assured of the anonymous nature of the research. This however meant that written consent could not be obtained. Interviews lasted between 15 and 30 minutes and were recorded on a voice recorder to be later recalled and transcribed.

#### **4.3.5 Archival Research**

Archival research was an ongoing process which was systematically carried out throughout the duration of the project. The documents on which this was based included the strategies and policies of various organisations related to Liverpool's

tourism, leisure and cultural industries and various 'news' items and press releases published on organisations' websites. The purpose of this exercise was initially to gain an insight into the background of Liverpool's tourism, leisure and cultural industries and to discover which organisations were involved, how and in what way they might impact on cultural consumption. As an ongoing process, it also enabled the monitoring of developments of various organisations and the urban tourist landscape as a whole. Nonetheless, it was recognised that in every written document there is some element of bias in terms of who the author is and who the intended reader is, therefore documents were read critically and not just taken at face value.

#### **4.3.6 Validity of Methods**

Although it was considered that the findings from each method would speak for themselves, the combination of methods described above was thought beneficial since it eliminated the possible bias of relying on a single method (Gill and Johnson, 1991: 127). Nonetheless, it is recognised that criticism has been voiced by qualitative researchers themselves about the ways such an approach has been understood to increase validity (Silverman, 2001: 233-235). The use of multiple methods is somewhat problematic since,

On the one hand, interpretivist evaluators need methodological quality assurances for their audiences. On the other hand, the very idea of prescriptions for quality or any other methodological concern is philosophically inconsistent with the basic tenets of interpretivism (Greene, 1994, in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 531).

The danger of using a combination of methods as a test of validity as Silverman (2001: 235) quite bluntly, but quite rightly comments is that it "ignores the context-bound and skilful character of social interaction and assumes that members are 'cultural dopes', who need a social scientist to dispel their illusions." For these reasons it is important here to maintain that different methods were not used in order to validate the findings from one method with the findings of another. It is recognised that data collected using one method are not directly comparable to those derived from a different method, due to the contextual nature of the collection strategies themselves (ibid.: 234).

A kind of methodological pluralism, in fact, was incorporated on a number of levels with the aim of capturing the "different aspects of empirical reality" (Denzin, 1978: 28, in Berg, 2001: 6) which each method reveals, thus achieving broader results and reducing the risk of excluding potentially crucial information. Firstly, this approach was

applied in terms of the different methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and archival research which were used but also on the level of the different sources of service providers, place consumers and written documents which were accessed. This was an attempt, not to prove or disprove findings from one set of data or method with another but to ensure that the research question was considered from a variety of viewpoints. In keeping with the dialectical approach of the research, it was not so much a question of comparing and contrasting the different data sets to find how the different sources consulted agreed on various issues, but in order to establish what the issues were and in which ways they were relevant according to the different sources. Thus the analysis of the data involved a constant process of comparing and contrasting issues which were raised and the contexts within which they were raised. Issues did not necessarily have to be reported by all sources to be considered significant, since it was recognised that the significance of an issue would vary according to the source. The ways in which these data were analysed will be given more attention in the following section relating specifically to data analysis. On a second level, the research subject was approached from a number of theoretical perspectives including, urban tourism, the consumption of culture, and more generally cultural studies and sociology. In philosophical terms, also, the concepts of structuralism, phenomenology and discourse theory were combined as discussed above in detail.

Thus, in sum, this methodological pluralism was used in these ways with the rationale that by "combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements" (Berg, 2001: 4).

## **4.4 Data Analysis**

### **4.4.1 Interview Analysis**

Analysis of the interviews was based on techniques which were in keeping with the concern of the research to understand the concepts and issues that respondents themselves associated with Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. As will be explained in more detail shortly, the purpose of the analysis exercise was not to produce a specific theoretical model, but rather to identify concepts and themes which related to the production and consumption of culture within Liverpool city centre, according to various groups and individuals who were involved in this process. These concepts and themes

were not exclusively derived from the data since certain themes had already been introduced when the interview agendas were devised. In fact, the claim that it is possible to entirely separate theory from empirical data has been questioned (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 32; Kelle, 1997: ¶ 6.2). Nonetheless, 'theory' was generated according to the concept of theory as *"a set of well-developed categories (e.g. themes, concepts) that are systematically inter-related through statements of relationship...."* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 22, emphasis in the original).

Analysis of the interviews began with the introduction of the interview transcripts into the CAQDAS software package Nvivo2. A standard procedure then followed whereby the transcripts were first read as a whole and then re-read with the purpose of extracting common themes (Ryan, 2000). The coding of the interview data involved both an inductive and abductive process (Kelle, 1997: ¶ 4.4), the outcome of which was the generation of both descriptive and conceptual categories of data. The importance of distinguishing between descriptive data and conceptual data in the coding process has been highlighted in the CAQDAS literature (Buston, 1997). Descriptive data is usually described in the respondent's own terms but subsumed under an existing category. This data can include codes assigned a meaningful name by the researcher, or "in vivo codes" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), that is, words taken directly from the respondent. Conceptual data can be expressed by the respondent but then attributed a specific conceptual value by the researcher. The descriptive categories were generally derived from themes already apparent in the interview schedule whereas the conceptual categories became apparent after more in-depth analysis, which associated ideas raised by respondents with particular theoretical concepts. Therefore, while certain preconceived concepts were introduced from the outset, these were then revised or developed as new concepts emerged. This qualitative approach was chosen since it "emphasises the fluidity of the text and content in the interpretive understanding of culture" (Ericson *et al.*, 1991: 50 in May, 2001:191). Taking into consideration the significance of words or phrases in relation to others within the text and other texts in this way is considered more meaningful than the quantitative approach of counting the frequency of words or phrases (May, 2001: 191-5). This procedure was applied to both the service provider interviews and the place consumer interviews.

Apart from the descriptive and conceptual data, the place consumer interviews also generated base data such as the location of the respondents, their age, their

motivation, whether they were residents or not, thus creating a profile of each respondent but also a profile of each of the five locations.

Having coded all relevant information at various nodes, the search for the thematic constructs, through which the data could be structured, began. This involved firstly retrieving and printing off the data attached to each node. The node retrievals were then studied, looking for structures in the data by comparing and contrasting both the individual entries of each node but also those from one node to another (Kelle, 1997: ¶ 5.5). In other words, the constant comparative method was adopted. This process eventually led to the production of a set of themes and sub-themes for each set of interviews, through which respondents' views could be presented, discussed and related to relevant concepts and theories from existing research.

#### **4.4.2 Participant Observation Analysis**

The data was analysed, again using the constant comparative method, comparing, on the one hand, the physical and social construction of the different locations and, on the other, the activity and reactions of different groups at different times. In order to do this, each entry in the log was read first of all and then thematic categories were developed from the data as a basis for comparison. These categories were based on the following elements: location, physical features, activity/ies (e.g. walking, looking, etc.), level of activity (e.g. busy, quiet), consumer profile (e.g. ages, visitor/resident status), sounds, time, day and date, and weather. Once this structure had been established, the entries were read in more detail, noting similarities or differences in each of the elements mentioned above. This process of analysis eventually generated a series of patterns which formed an image of the social, physical and temporal regulation of each location and how these interact.

After analysing each set of data individually, all the sets of findings, those from the service provider interviews, the place consumer interviews, the observation and the archival research were finally compared. This generated a more general thematic structure which synthesised the findings from each of the data sets previously presented. This final level of analysis also used the context of the theoretical concepts on which the project was based as a point of comparison and a springboard for discussion. Therefore, although as a case study the research was considered valid and complete in its own right, the theoretical dimension allowed it to be related to the wider conceptual context of the research areas on which it touched.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

On reflection, the methodological approach which was adopted proved particularly effective in achieving the aims of the research. The inclusion of both service providers and place consumers was particularly effective since it allowed the dynamic interplay of the production-consumption process to be revealed. The knowledge derived from the archival research also proved especially important and useful at the level of analysis and discussion of the data in a comparative context, where the views of the producers and consumers and the various organisations' structures and policies were systematically explored. Moreover, the interview method was key to eliciting the actual identities, experiences and views of the producers and consumers of culture; whereas the observation method was particularly instructive in creating a bigger picture of the urban tourist landscape, which the relatively small sample of place consumers could not produce alone.

While there has been considerable debate concerning the reflexivity of the researcher (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000), I felt that my own position as a resident of Liverpool was advantageous to the outcomes of the research. Being already familiar with the city and its dynamics was useful in the research design but also in terms of relating to respondents. However, my socialisation as a place consumer among many others added to my knowledge and enabled me to see the urban landscape in a less preconceived manner – one which was rooted in experiences similar to other place consumers. Also, reflecting on the details of the research process enabled me to become more aware of how my own feelings, identity, experiences and intentions interacted with and influenced those I was researching and the outcomes of the research. Therefore, I consider myself not just a researcher or an author, but an interlocutor in the multi-dimensional dialogue that unfolds between the researcher, research activity and the various producers of knowledge. As such, I feel the following account based on the dynamic process of the consumption of culture in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape is connected in some way to the 'critical turn' in tourism research, which calls for a more reflexive and critical methodological approach (Ateljevic *et al.*, 2007).

In each of the results chapters which follow, extracts of raw data are thematically presented and then discussed in relation to existing academic research. In this sense, the findings become theorised and add to the existing body of knowledge relating to the

**consumption of culture within an urban tourist context. The next chapter will present findings from the first set of empirical data, based on interviews with service providers associated with Liverpool's tourism, leisure and cultural industries.**



## **5. Producing Culture within Liverpool's Urban Tourist Landscape**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce some of the issues surrounding Liverpool's development as a tourist destination and the production and promotion of culture within this infrastructure. Having considered in chapter 3 how culture and tourism are defined in strategic terms through official documentation, this chapter will follow on by developing these points through first-hand accounts of those working within the industry. The arguments put forward here are based on semi-structured interviews with various service providers connected with the tourism and cultural industries in Liverpool (for a list of organisations consulted, see Appendix B). Furthermore, while the focus of this thesis is the experience of consumers, service providers' views were considered significant to this piece of research. Relating back to the discursive approach explained in the methodology chapter, it was considered important to situate place consumers' experiences within the context of their production in order to gain an understanding of the agents involved in the production of cultural experiences within the urban tourist landscape and how they may impact on what is consumed, how it is consumed and why. Therefore, the findings presented below will begin to develop the discursive dimension of the thesis in this sense.

### **5.2 The Development of Liverpool's Tourism Infrastructure**

#### **5.2.1 Partnerships and Leadership**

As has been documented in the urban tourism literature, the coordination of the industry is rather complex, due to the number of products and services involved (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000: 138; Bramwell, 1998). However, over and above this, among the respondents there was a recognition that the tourism and leisure industry needs to consult and work along with, not only other organisations, but also other sectors, for example, education. The Mersey Partnership plays a key role in coordinating the industry, and bringing together various public and private partners. This organisation appears to represent a range of cluster groups, thus taking on board the various issues which may arise in the coordination of the various sectors. However, while the advantages of public and private partnership were recognised by respondents, there were indications that certain initiatives are not considered to be entirely beneficial. For example, having to pay fees to certain membership

organisations was thought to be a strain on some SME's limited resources and not conducive to encouraging individual initiatives that have potential. As this respondent explains,

*...you've got to join them and it costs a fortune. So if you're some rag-assed kid from Toxteth who's thought, "I'll have a go. I'll set up some tours and I'll charge people seven quid a head. Tap me into the tourist flow Mersey Partnership." "...you give us two thousand pound a year and we'll put you on the circulation list." You know, what's that about? It's hardly tapping the potential that's out there. (sp 14) <sup>1</sup>*

On the other hand, initiatives to enhance the skills and standards of various service providers, and thus the destination's overall product, it was emphasised, are not subject to membership fees,

*Well, as I say we're a membership organisation, so if an attraction or a hotel wishes to be promoted in any of our publications or on our website, they have to be a member, they have to pay a fee.....We do work with non-members on a whole range of other areas, for example, on my side of the fence, on the development side, on the skills, quality... (sp 2)*

Some respondents expressed the view that there is perhaps too much dependency on the public sector and public finance and that there are too many public agencies. The latter, it is argued, results in a lack of real leadership with various agencies and roles competing against each other,

*At local government level there is a huge gaping hole is the best way to describe it. So when you put that against the fact that there are at least 30 agencies who are supposed to be in charge, most of them competing against the others, which must take millions of pounds of public money every year, millions and millions.....There are some people who are doing as good a job as they possibly can in very difficult circumstances, but there are others who haven't got any idea at all how destructive the current set up is. So, no visible leadership. A lot of very circumscribe experience and vast amounts of public money being wasted and a huge huge dependency on the public sector, or public finance which is quite disproportionate to how it should be. (sp 5)*

Another issue which arose was the fact that many of the higher management positions are taken up by people who are perceived to have experience of the industry but don't necessarily have an in-depth knowledge of the state of affairs in Liverpool as they have been brought in from somewhere else,

*They haven't got their eye on the ball because they don't have that innate appreciation and understanding of Liverpool. (sp 14)*

It is also suggested that jurisdictional boundaries, especially between Liverpool and the other boroughs in Merseyside, conflict with the coordination of the industry.

*Southport does not want to be part of Merseyside, does not want to associate with Liverpool.....Wirral again, because you've got the River Mersey, the River is a huge divide. It might [as well] be the Atlantic Ocean because people do not easily cross over from one place to the other. (sp 4)*

In short, it appears that politics often overshadow the best interests of the city.

As far as the management of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture programme is concerned a number of opinions were voiced. Respondents' attitudes towards Liverpool being awarded the European Capital of Culture title were that generally it was something positive for Liverpool. However several criticisms were raised. Firstly, it was suggested that for the overall management to be handled by Liverpool Culture Company was neither ideal nor necessary. While a body was needed to oversee the event, this body could have acted as facilitators rather than controlling the whole event,

*They didn't see themselves as facilitators of Liverpool's very rich, dynamic culture and get an events organiser. There's loads of events organisers in Liverpool. Give them 2 million quid to go and organise 50 cultural events, 50 big cultural events. (sp 14)*

In fact, it was mentioned that some projects had already been in place or suggested but were now being labelled under the umbrella of Capital of Culture. Secondly, although there were claims that the strategy would extend beyond 2008, concern was raised as to how the strategy would be taken forward and by whom after 2008. Thirdly, since no programme of events had been announced and projects on the ground appeared not to be progressing as quickly as hoped, the question was raised as to whether politics was overshadowing the real purpose and how ready the city would be in 2008. Finally, effective communication with the public concerning what being European Capital of Culture would involve was perceived to be lacking, as this comment demonstrates,

*Perhaps there's a public relations issue here about letting people know what's going on in ways other than having a website because not everybody has access to a website and those people who do, don't necessarily think "Oh I wonder what the Culture Company are up to today?" It's going to be a lot more direct and it's got to get into people's homes. (sp 7)*

In terms of the business community there was some recognition that Liverpool Culture Company was trying to adopt a holistic approach and involve companies in improving the standard of business in the city. However, it was felt that most businesses did still not feel involved and that sponsorship programmes whereby they could use the Capital of Culture brand were beyond their means. Local creative and arts organisations did not feel that they were getting the support they needed but were attempting to carry out their projects and involve various communities nonetheless. A respondent from one organisation explained that initially they had been selected as ambassadors by Liverpool Culture Company to promote the city in the run up to Capital of Culture year, but ultimately would not be included in the final celebrations,

*There was all this support and attention which, it raises your expectations, it makes you think that you are doing the right thing, so it should be considered. And then suddenly decisions are made and we are not supposed to be a part of the whole thing.....So from January to March, April, May, six months of this uncertainty and insecurity is really kind of beginning to break people. And people are feeling so.....kind of you know not engaged with what's happening.....I think an artistic work becomes a culture when it starts to address social issues, when it becomes aware and fulfils its social responsibility of keeping people together, giving them mental strength to go through life, addresses the issues that are surrounding their lives. So that sort of thing, but then if you do that you are seen as a community group (makes dismissive shooing gesture with hand), "They can do things with five thousand pounds, let's leave them there".*  
(sp 13)

### **5.2.2 Marketing Liverpool**

Despite some of the tensions referred to above, it appears that there are a number of common aims to which the organisations represented in the research appear to be working towards. One of these stems from the fact that Liverpool has not traditionally been perceived as a tourism destination. Therefore, respondents felt that the city needs to be marketed as such and the tourism infrastructure needs to be developed if Liverpool is to seriously compete in the global tourism market. This common direction was evident in the strategies of certain organisations, such as National Museums Liverpool, for example,

*Primarily we're thinking about how we get people into our museums and galleries, but part of that is getting people to Liverpool in the first place. They can only come to our venues if they are visiting the city. So we are thinking and actively working with others to think about the attractiveness of*

*the city and do things to improve it. We aren't just internally focused; we are very much Liverpool focused. (sp 16)*

This synergistic approach could also be detected on a regional level. For instance, some organisations were aware of the potential benefits of working together with Manchester, although traditionally the two cities are considered as rivals,

*In 2008 I think that's going to be less and less of an issue because people coming up from London have no idea about this so-called divide and if you're going to take the trouble to come up for a few days then you may well want to catch some things in Manchester as well as Liverpool. So that's something that we need to be thinking about more. (sp 16)*

What was seen as key to the development of Liverpool's tourism industry in particular was not so much the physical infrastructure as the coordination between various organisations and an improvement in customer service. The service providers interviewed recognised that the city's marketing activities need to be coordinated and that pooling resources could be cost-effective. Nonetheless some of them explained that they do not have the means to carry out extensive overseas marketing and therefore their activity is mostly limited to the national or even local market. However, respondents realised that the overseas market is becoming increasingly accessible due to low cost airlines. Nonetheless, despite the recognition that Liverpool's marketing needed to be unified, there was not necessarily agreement on which aspects of the city should be marketed. Liverpool's city break experience, for example, is marketed on a number of themes such as culture, The Beatles, maritime heritage, sport, etc. However, some respondents believed this creates a very compartmentalised image of what the city has to offer and risks resulting in a very standardised experience, which does not necessarily reflect the reality of the city,

*The tourism aspect for me is about the city being attractive enough, and eclectic enough, and interesting enough and diverse enough in order to be able to have a creative process, a substance that tourism would be enough for people to say, "Oh that's an interesting place, I think I'll go there. I can't get that in Manchester. I can't get that in Paris. I'll have to go to Liverpool if I want to get that." So again that's another one we need to look at. What's unique about the place rather than this standard tourist package which I've got huge concerns that that's what we're looking to do right now.....So, "Come to Liverpool but then maybe just go to Bournemouth or London or Nottingham or whatever", because the tourist infrastructure they're developing is all identical because it's all done through these careers. The tourism industry is literally transferable from Butlins to Liverpool to Glasgow*

*to the Scottish Highlands. We need to be looking at something different.  
(sp 14)*

Furthermore, it is suggested that the cultural diversity of the city is not promoted enough and that increased promotion of this aspect of the city would make the city centre more attractive to a wider range of consumers,

*With regards to culture and tourism, there's a cultural vibrancy in this city which the city doesn't promote enough and there's cultural products.....and I'm sorry to use that term, out there that the city doesn't really market or get behind enough or support enough. So with regards to culture and tourism I think there's some fantastic things that the city's got to offer. (sp 15)*

Finally, it was felt that activity in the city centre was still quite limited. While retail outlets were beginning to stay open later, it was recognised that this was something that could be developed within other attractions,

*There is a campaign in the city to get more street life and cultural stuff going on in the evening and I think one of the reasons maybe it didn't work when it was tried was that there wasn't enough of a kind of critical mass, so there wasn't enough momentum and so we didn't have enough visitors and obviously we have to pay staff to staff the galleries and if you're paying a lot of attendants to be on hand and you're getting fifty visitors in three hours you can't really justify it. But on the other hand you need to build momentum with other cultural partners to try and create that buzzy feel every night of the week... (sp 16)*

### **Customer Service**

As far as the way in which Liverpool is marketed, many respondents believed a focus on customer service was essential. The following remark is indicative of the views of a number of respondents,

*It's not that we are lacking in visitor attractions, I think it's the bits that join the attractions together, some of the public areas and sometimes a bit patchy customer service and quality in most private sectors which lets the area down. (sp 2)*

Respondents acknowledged that this is not a problem unique to Liverpool but all the same it needs to be addressed. While certain initiatives are in place, customer service is still not of a high enough standard. One of the main initiatives, the 'Liverpool Welcome' programme draws on the premise that Liverpudlians are known for their friendly, helpful and welcoming attitude to strangers, something which visitors to the city are known to appreciate. However, it was suggested that the initiatives in place do

not encourage a fundamental attitudinal change but are based on rather prescriptive superficial responses and behaviour. This could have the adverse effect of local service providers appearing rather false and dampening their spontaneous reaction.

Representatives from a number of organisations also mentioned the importance of good internal customer service within the organisation in order to be able to provide end consumers with a satisfactory experience. Some respondents also emphasised the need to change negative perceptions of the industry, such as that it offers low-paid, seasonal, or low-status jobs, first of all, in order to encourage more potential employees to consider it as a career choice and secondly, in order to persuade funding bodies to invest in and support employees in their chosen career. The latter was seen as particularly applicable to organisations in the arts and creative sector, which felt there was not sufficient financial support for them to be able to reach their full potential. Therefore, it appears that, in theory, a holistic approach to excellent customer service in Liverpool is being envisaged. It seems though that these principles have not yet been fully realised.

### *Tourist Information*

Tourist information was also an aspect of customer service which was deemed to be sub-standard. Firstly, it was suggested that the sign-posting in the city is not clear and consistent enough. Although the city centre is quite small and therefore navigation is not a major problem, better sign-posting would improve visitors' experience. Secondly, there was some concern that the information provided was not comprehensive or accurate enough. Tourist information is largely controlled by The Mersey Partnership and Liverpool Culture Company. Research carried out by these organisations indicated that much information is obtained before visitors' arrival, therefore reducing the role of TICs,

*We still do the visitor guide; we haven't replaced the visitor guide, but increasingly the visitor guide is more of a piece of print that people use when they're here and the information that they get in advance is increasingly by the Internet. It's shown really in terms of that the numbers of people visiting tourist information centres is actually declining slightly now because people don't...people can download a map off the Internet and get all the information they want from their home before they arrive. (sp 2)*

All the same, certain respondents mentioned the need for a more comprehensive visitor guide, as indicated by the extract below,

*It's good to show different aspects of Liverpool to widen the range of potential visitors. The city has got so much to offer and it's a shame that only those who are into Beatles and football come over. But even they have difficulty finding a place to eat or to have coffee and stuff but Liverpool's got quite a few nice cafés and good places to eat but it hasn't been presented well. (sp 11)*

The current information appears to document 'mainstream' events, attractions and venues and therefore does not portray the diversity of places and things to do and see in Liverpool, which would potentially interest visitors and give a greater insight into the cultures of the city. As one respondent mentioned, there is therefore perhaps scope for a 'What's On' type of publication which would serve the needs of both visitors and residents. Greater foreign language provision was also considered essential for Liverpool to be recognised as an international tourist destination.

### *Place Image*

Finally, Liverpool's image was considered to be a crucial element involved in selling the city. Respondents agreed that Liverpool has a strong image. Various associations were mentioned such as The Beatles, football, humour, crime and unemployment. It was recognised that in other parts of the UK, especially in the south of England, the public had negative perceptions of Liverpool, whereas, overseas, people tended to perceive the city in a more favourable light. However, respondents acknowledged that the city's reputation was improving and that negative perceptions tended to be based on lack of experience. Respondents claimed that not only was Liverpool's image beginning to change from negative to more positive but that changes taking place in the city were actually giving it new associations. Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture, its overall regeneration and its growing student numbers who act as ambassadors for the city, were all mentioned as contributing factors to the repositioning of the city. It was believed that the media, in particular, has a large role to play in public perceptions of Liverpool. In the past, the media has been responsible for portraying the city in a negative light but recently it has had much more positive coverage. The only concern was that errors in planned schemes could potentially reduce Liverpool's new found credibility.

*I'd say it's probably changing but changing slowly and things like the [European Capital of Culture] bid have helped enormously. I think we do keep shooting ourselves in the foot with things like the trams and the Fourth Grace and the Kings Dock but I think it is changing and I think if we can have a really good year of culture then that will change all that. (sp 8)*



## **5.3 Regenerating Liverpool**

### **5.3.1 Physical Regeneration**

It is clear from the respondents' comments that the development that is taking place in Liverpool city centre is resonant of the much needed regeneration of the city and therefore should be considered in a positive light. There is evidence that the city is undergoing a 'circle of growth' as physical developments bring economic investment which in turn encourages further investment and so on. On a social level more job opportunities have been created which is considered to reduce unemployment and increase graduate retention rates and also residential development is encouraging people to move back into the city centre which adds to its vibrancy and makes it more pleasant for people to spend their time there. Certain factors in particular have been highlighted as catalysts to this regeneration. Firstly, Liverpool's designation as European Capital of Culture 2008 is seen as playing a major role. However, respondents were keen not to attribute signs of regeneration entirely to this accolade,

*I think what is happening is part of the whole regeneration of Liverpool, which is happening anyway. (sp 12)*

Numerous development projects are being undertaken to increase the city's appeal for visitors and investors which appears to be bringing further investment. European Capital of Culture is just one strand of this process. Secondly, the increasing development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport has contributed to the economic and physical regeneration of Speke, a previously degenerated area in the south of the city. One respondent in particular commented on the radical transformation of the area,

*There's no doubt that the airport has been a catalyst to the regeneration of south Liverpool. When I first started here, well I remember as a youth, it was a pretty horrible area. When all the big factories closed down, Dunlops, Bryant & May, all the big people closed down. This was not a particularly nice area, and as a gateway to the city it's transformed itself. (sp 1)*

Furthermore, it was noted that benefits of this development extend to the city centre and city region as a whole with increased opportunities for business links and inbound tourism.

From respondents' comments it is clear that Liverpool's suitability as a tourist destination, in particular, has clearly increased in recent years. Liverpool's accommodation stock has greatly improved recently. However, most of the accommodation is at the higher end of the market thus excluding potential visitors on a

lower budget. In terms of transport, access to the city is much easier than it was with the development of the airline network through Liverpool John Lennon Airport and faster train journeys. However, it is still perceived that train connections are not frequent enough, especially to and from the south of the country which could discourage visitors. Furthermore, a downside of the regeneration of Liverpool city centre is the constant disruption to traffic caused by road works, which again could be off-putting to visitors arriving in the city. Parking was also mentioned as a problem for individuals but especially coach drivers, which could ultimately dissuade coach operators from coming to Liverpool.

### **5.3.2 Homogenisation of the Urban Tourist Environment**

Certain respondents expressed the view that Liverpool should not purely focus on tourism since there was a need to regenerate the city socially and culturally, first and foremost as a place to live. It was suggested that in Liverpool there seems to be a desire by certain officials to sanitise and standardise the city centre to make it more attractive to visitors. However, on the whole, this was not considered an acceptable solution since the issues needed to be addressed at their root. For example, the amount of litter in the city centre is seen as very discouraging and a sign of residents' lack of pride in their environment. While extensive budgets are allocated to street cleaning perhaps it would be better to try and educate people about the effects of their behaviour. Campaigns have been carried out to try and draw residents' attention to the problem but these do not appear to have been successful. Furthermore it was mentioned that anti-social behaviour from youths who tend to gather in certain areas could be tackled, not by driving them out of the city centre, but by providing outlets for their culture. One respondent in particular, argued that children and homeless people hanging around on the street should be accommodated as part and parcel of Liverpool's urban culture,

*So you know Goths can go and hang around Quiggins and Derby Square and all the scallies<sup>2</sup> can hang around outside the Crown Court while they're waiting to see what's happened to their fourteen year old brother. So it's all there but it's not all there. And you get shoppers going past and your office workers and your bums in the street and round the back of Old Hall Street. That's what downtowns do and it's all part of the mix. If you haven't got the bums, if you haven't got the kids, you're losing an essential part of the dynamism. (sp 14)*

The closing of the alternative shopping centre Quiggins, particularly popular with younger residents, to make way for the Liverpool One retail development was

considered to be an example of this standardisation and had caused considerable controversy. Furthermore, the increasing popularity of the city has resulted in an increase in land and property prices which means that certain businesses and residents based in the city centre are being pushed out. In addition, the construction of a large number of luxury apartments was seen by some as surplus to demand and perhaps contrary to the development of leisure facilities such as artists' studios, as this respondent explains,

*Quite often you hear about, like the Ropewalks for instance, it's going to be a big artists' village. There'll be lots of arty people there and all the places they're refurbishing are going to have arty spaces in them, but it's just not going to happen. It's not good economics for developers. When they present the plans, they'll have like a space on the plan for gallery space or something but then when they actually start building it, they change the plans. They actually have to get planning permission to do that but they'll say, "Well, we couldn't find any money to pay for this, so we're going to turn that into a couple more flats instead." And that happens. (sp 12)*

### **5.3.3 Balancing Tourism Development and Residents' Needs**

In general, it was suggested that there is perhaps too much emphasis on the physical development of the city,

*I think the city's building its physical infrastructure, but it's not building its communities' capacity (sp 15 ),*

which could become detrimental to the needs of the community to whom, for the most part tourism, is insignificant. The majority of respondents believed that for the city to attract visitors it had to have some appeal first and foremost for its residents, which it didn't necessarily have, as this respondent indicates,

*So I think the city has more to offer as a destination for day trippers, overseas visitors than it has for Liverpudlians. (sp 1)*

While it was acknowledged that most residents don't tend to visit the city's tourist attractions, except on the basis of showing friends and family round, it was suggested that there were some attractions which could attract residents on a more regular basis. Events, in particular, were mentioned as something which appealed to both the visitor and local market and should therefore be encouraged. More importantly, it was argued that the cultural profile and talent of the residents of the city could constitute an attraction in themselves and should thus be invested in. Therefore, it seems that with effective planning, a balance can be struck between tourism development and the other functions of the city.

## **5.4 Representations of Liverpool Culture**

### **5.4.1 Heritage v. Contemporary Culture**

Liverpool has not always been strongly associated with culture, although, at present culture is being used to promote the city as a tourist destination to visitors and investors. However, it is suggested by some that the promotion of Liverpool is very much heritage based and thus not relevant to contemporary Liverpool. Other respondents consider Liverpool's heritage to be a significant attraction and claim that Liverpool's World Heritage Site status has not been promoted enough and has the potential to attract visitors who would not otherwise come to the city. The heritage debate is a common one which is not about to be resolved here, however, many respondents did agree that a number of the attractions are now quite outdated and so Liverpool lacks something fresh and exciting. As this respondent suggests,

*I suppose they could promote current music rather than just the old stuff all the time. As I say, we do have a thriving music scene and I think people tend to forget. At some point we're going to have to say, "It's not just The Beatles". (sp 12)*

Therefore, the 'culture' which is being promoted is perhaps outdated and does not reflect the reality of the city's cultural life.

On the other hand, it was recognised that Liverpool has a great cultural history which is still relevant to people in the city. However, so far many of its stories have been left untold. In particular it was emphasised that Liverpool has an international profile which is not promoted to its full potential. It was both shaped by and shaped international culture and this cultural diversity remains and could be drawn on to the city's advantage it is claimed,

*That cultural mix, that influx, refreshing vibrant culture, that's especially relevant for Liverpool because it's not steady English culture. Scouse is a cosmopolitan and international culture....If the offer in Liverpool is reflected off the cultural dynamism in the place, i.e. how alive we are as a cultural entity, then that in itself would be interesting for tourists. (sp 14)*

### **5.4.2 Cultural Engagement and Social Inclusion**

The extent to which Liverpool's cultural offer is socially inclusive constituted a central point of discussion. Importantly, it was remarked that the extent of the city's ethnic diversity is not apparent as the majority of residents from these ethnic groups do not tend to visit the city centre. Therefore more representation of their cultures in the city

centre could possibly involve them more. Furthermore, geographical and socio-economic factors were mentioned as contributing to a lack of engagement of residents with cultural life in the city centre. Often, respondents considered these factors to be linked as suggested here,

*There definitely seems to be a loyalty to the neighbourhood going on, perhaps in some cases not even feeling part of the wider city, you know greater Liverpool, but then that doesn't hold true for people living in Sefton because we get a lot of visitors from Sefton. So they might be as far away as Formby but they still manage to get into town. So I think there is a class thing going on... (pc 16)*

However, it was clear that tackling these issues was on the agenda of some organisations in the city. A respondent from National Museums Liverpool, for example, indicated that while the percentage of their visitors from lower socio-economic groups was in fact higher than average, they were working to increase the number of visitors from these groups by directly targeting them. However, they were also attempting to create access through the manner in which collections were presented and interpreted,

*we do go to great lengths to try and interpret collections in such a way as people don't have to have a degree in art to try and understand what's going on at The Walker or be a naturalist to try and understand what's going on at World Museum so we do make it easily understandable and accessible... (pc 16)*

Moreover, it was highlighted that Liverpool has always been a creative city and that there was potential to use its local creative talent which is largely untapped and under-resourced as an element of Liverpool's tourism offer. The benefits of a cultural strategy as a vehicle for motivating and involving residents were put forward as follows,

*So I think culture, when it's art and culture, cultural heritage, cultural diversity, can be a massive, hugely fantastic vehicle for engaging, for motivating, for liberating people.....I think if we can utilise some of the physical cultural aspects of the city and engage the people, the communities at the same time, then I think we're actually ensuring that the cultural heritage of the city is developed but then ultimately at the forefront of that, the local people are benefiting because I think although the cultural physical side of the city is developing, the actual engagement of local people in that development is minimal. (sp 15)*

## ***European Capital of Culture***

Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture 2008 was considered to be an immense platform from which various cultural aspects of the city could be promoted and engaged in. The majority of respondents had a broad, inclusive definition of culture which gave some indication of what they thought Capital of Culture should be about – certainly not just the high arts and museum visits. However, it was thought that, as with cultural development as a whole in the city, there was an emphasis on physical and economic regeneration rather than the social regeneration that was hoped for. While it was acknowledged that the Creative Communities team, part of Liverpool Culture Company were working with local communities trying to involve them in the cultural life of the city, it was thought that two of the reasons Liverpool won the bid, its cultural diversity and the backing of local people, were now being slightly overlooked. Nonetheless, it was clear that there were organisations working on their own initiative to bring about social inclusion through cultural projects like the following,

*I mean every project I am doing, especially Capital of Culture, I'm trying to take it to people who will perhaps not think about it and perhaps don't feel they are engaged. And in my own very small way I'm kind of trying to keep those links going. (sp 13)*

The point was also raised that a lot of poverty still exists in Liverpool and that therefore the regeneration of underprivileged residential areas should perhaps be given priority. A further criticism was that perhaps regeneration projects were being focused primarily on the city centre and neglecting the outskirts and suburbs of the city. However, respondents did not naively believe that cultural regeneration alone could eradicate problems overnight,

*...you can't do regeneration on culture alone. It's no good having fantastic culture and people living in squalid houses. You've got to get the infrastructure right and you've got to get the places where people live into a good standard as well because then people are not going to appreciate culture if they are wondering whether they can get a job, are they going to have a roof over their head. (sp 4)*

So, it was recognised that it may not be easy to convince those living in poverty of the benefits of cultural activity, but that culture and economic investment could work together. Furthermore, culture was considered to be perhaps Liverpool's strongest asset and therefore a culture based strategy was on the whole believed to be fitting to the character and vision of the city as summarised in this statement,

*For Liverpool the simple fact is that we've got a really big cultural offer and that seems to be the thing that we're strongest at so we need to play to our strengths. So that must be the most sensible option. (pc 16)*

## **5.5 Discussion**

From respondents' comments, it is clear that they feel Liverpool has the potential to be a top class tourist destination. Furthermore, it is also evident that a wealth of cultural activity and resources exist in the city. However, it is clear that there is scope to develop tourism and culture further and more specifically in conjunction with each other. A number of themes emerged from the interviews carried out which often reflected issues raised in the academic literature and also in the strategies relating to culture and tourism in Liverpool. Some of these themes featured particularly strongly, therefore it seems appropriate to devote further attention to these here.

Firstly, local and regional partnerships were considered essential and clearly certain organisations within the city are working to build these. This approach echoes sections of strategic documents for the city which refer to the same principles. For example, 'The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool' refers to the various cultural players in Liverpool and highlights how these contribute to the overall vision for the city (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 26-76). Furthermore, the document indicates how the strategy is set within a national and regional context and highlights how it shares the vision and aims of other bodies within this wider geographical framework (ibid.: 8-23). Particular attention is given to the relationship between Liverpool and Manchester, as the region's two core cities and how they aim to establish both healthy competition and synergy between each other (ibid: 14-22). Likewise, documents relating to tourism in Liverpool indicate how the tourism infrastructure is structured through local partnerships (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 4; 2006a: 5), but also how development is envisaged through regional and national alliances (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 17).

However, the majority of respondents were in some way critical of how culture in the city was being shaped, especially in relation to the visitor economy. Concerns were raised that certain spaces in the city centre were being sanitised and standardised to bring them in line with visitors' expectations. Furthermore, it was claimed that certain social groups were discouraged from 'hanging about' in the city centre area for fear of creating a poor impression amongst visitors. However, it was argued that these policies stilt the cultural vibrancy of the city which is part of its appeal. These are issues which

relate not just to Liverpool but to cities as a whole, as indicated through the work of Bryman (2004b) on 'The Disneyization of Society'. In addition, the tension between representing the city's heritage and promoting local contemporary culture was a matter that respondents felt strongly about. They tended to believe that there was an over-emphasis on heritage while local contemporary culture was not being supported enough. Again, this situation has been documented in the academic literature by authors such as Clarke (2000) and Craik (1997). Moreover, from studying the official visitor guides for the city (The Mersey Partnership, 2005b; 2006b), it appears that respondents' view that the tourism offer which is promoted is somewhat limited compared to what the city actually has to offer is quite justified. On the whole, then, it seems the way forward for Liverpool, as has been suggested by Clarke (2000) and Richards and Wilson (2006) in relation to urban destinations in general, is to combine tourism with the city's cultural activity and creative talent, thus providing opportunities for the local community and creating a 'home grown' tourist offer, which is currently relevant and dynamic.

Finally, social inclusion was perceived to be a crucial element of Liverpool's cultural and regeneration strategies. Ethnic diversity, socio-economic status and, often in association with the latter, geographical location in particular are mentioned as factors contributing to the lack of engagement with the cultural offer of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. However, findings from the Impacts 08 programme indicate that representation of people from BME and lower socio-economic groups amongst audiences at Liverpool Culture Company events was above average in 2007, thus meeting the aims of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Liverpool Culture Company to create a broader audience base at events (Impacts 08, 2009: 4). Social inclusion appears to be a common aim of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 1999: 6), Liverpool's tourism (The Mersey Partnership, 2003) and cultural strategies (Liverpool City Council, 2002) and various organisations within Liverpool and Merseyside. So, it would seem that while the production of culture within the city has been interpreted as framed by capitalist principles (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004), there are socialist ideals inherent within this framework, even if they are working at a sub-level. This, therefore, takes us back to one of the main debates of chapter 2 concerning the extent to which culture, as processed through the tourism and cultural industries, can be considered just another commodity. From respondents' comments, it appears that there is evidence of commodification of culture to some extent but that



culture is also considered to have a humanistic value which is being drawn on in an attempt to bring about social regeneration in the city.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The key themes which arose from service providers' responses were the following:

- **Development of Liverpool's tourism infrastructure**
  - **Partnerships and leadership**
  - **Marketing Liverpool**
- **Regenerating Liverpool**
  - **Physical regeneration**
  - **Homogenisation of the urban tourist environment**
  - **Balancing tourism development and residents' needs**
- **Representations of Liverpool culture**
  - **Heritage v. contemporary culture**
  - **Cultural engagement and social inclusion**

It has been demonstrated by theorists how urban tourism is increasingly used as a strategy to regenerate urban areas once in decline. While this approach can be beneficial, it must be ensured that tourism does not take precedence over the other functions of the city and that pressures to compete with other cities do not result in the standardisation of the city and its culture. It has been discussed above how Liverpool is using tourism and cultural strategies to bring about its socio-economic and physical regeneration. However, while the organisations in the city appear to be working to a significant extent in line with each other and with the city's cultural and tourism strategy, certain tensions are evident. It is recognised that the city has a wealth of cultural and creative resources, but these are not being used to their full potential. The cultural diversity and creativity of the city could be employed further in order to produce a distinctive tourist offer and simultaneously engage the local community in the cultural life of the city.

However, while the observations of service providers within the city have certainly been insightful, these have largely, but not entirely, been made from an industry perspective. The next chapter will address how culture is defined and perceived in relation to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape from the perspective of its consumers. This will

allow a deeper understanding of how culture is consumed within this space and what this experience involves and signifies for consumers.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> 'sp' indicates that the quote is taken from an interview with a service provider. For further information on the particular respondent, refer to Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> Scally: A slang term, used particularly in Liverpool, to refer to a member of a social sub-culture. The word often has working class associations. Derived from the term 'scallywag', its current use is similar in meaning to 'yob'. The 'scally' is also usually associated with the stereotypical dress of tracksuit and trainers.

## **6. Place Consumers' Definitions and Perceptions of Culture**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The relationship between culture, people and place forms the central axis of this thesis. Therefore, it is important to understand the dimensions and meaning of culture from within this context, rather than as understood from more general definitions of culture. So far this thesis has ascertained how culture is conceived and strategically orchestrated by those involved in Liverpool's cultural, tourism and leisure industries. This chapter, however, addresses a central objective of the thesis, which is to establish how place consumers define and understand culture, especially in relation to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. If culture is to be made relevant to its potential consumers, then it is important to understand its significance to them and the places and social situations within which they consume it. The findings below address these points through extracts taken from interviews with place consumers.

### **6.2 Defining and Understanding Culture**

The definition of culture has been the subject of much academic debate. However, for the reasons explained above, it is imperative for this research to consider how culture is thought of in lay terms too. The ambiguity of the concept of culture and its dynamic and discursive character are evident in the variety of definitions respondents gave. On the whole, respondents talked of culture in three senses: culture as something social, culture as relating to place and culture as art. However, a large number of participants gave more than one definition of culture. The different definitions given by each respondent did not necessarily relate to the same understanding of culture. For example, they may have thought of culture as art but also as something specific to place.

Culture as a social phenomenon was expressed in the following terms by respondents:

- A way of life
- Social cohesion / common experience
- Social identities
- Ethnic diversity
- Personal interests
- Social / personal development
- Education / learning
- Upbringing
- Mentality
- Moral values
- Customs

- Beliefs
- Social systems
- Language

Culture was also considered to be linked to place through the following:

- Place identity
- Tradition
- Heritage
- History
- Events
- Sense of belonging

Finally, culture was understood to relate to art as follows:

- Art in general
- Architecture
- Cinema
- Drama / theatre
- Literature
- Music
- Photography
- Arts and cultural attractions
- Contemporary creative activity
- Informal artistic expression

### 6.2.1 Characteristics of Culture

There was nothing particularly unusual about the way respondents defined culture. The number of definitions given highlights the complexity of culture and, therefore, it is not surprising that some respondents were initially not too clear about the meaning of the term.

*Culture? It's the way people live isn't it? (pc 30),*

or that they could not narrow it down to a single definition,

*It's difficult really because it's so many things. (pc 79)*

Some participants recognised that there were varying definitions of culture but admitted that they personally tended to consider culture in quite a narrow sense,

*For me I think it's sort of summed up in things like art galleries, through theatre, literature, interesting films, vibrant music scene, drama, arts, that's kind of how I think of culture. There's all the other sort of community culture and international culture but those are the sorts of things that I think of. (pc 92)*

*I think I'm quite biased because I'm an architect so I just think of culture as kind of the arts, architecture, art, theatre, things like that rather than.....I*

*suppose it's broader than that but my interpretation of it is probably that.  
(pc 95)*

Other respondents challenged these specific definitions and argued that the concept of culture is relative and may include human activity in general,

*I think that in Britain culture is from the middle class and filters down and we are supposed to think that culture is what middle class people do. I think culture can be anything; it's what you want it to be really....I mean culture can be just like going to somewhere you wouldn't normally go and meeting different people from other walks of life rather than going to the museum, art gallery. It just depends really I think everyone's version of culture would be different. It's all relative really. Some people would view other people as not cultured. You might get a scally wag on the street who might think that their mate isn't cultured because he reads the Guardian and not The Mirror. It's all relative really. (pc 34)*

*It's a human construction. It's like an umbrella and [under] the umbrella of culture you can put music and art and food and football. It's subjective. It's a personal construction of the human being. (pc 93)*

What these comments emphasise is that both culture and the definition of culture are socially constructed and that the notion of what constitutes culture is changing.

What was particularly interesting, however, was that there appeared to be a number of dualisms in the way culture was understood. First of all, culture was considered as something which had recourse to the past on the one hand, but at the same time was also relevant to the present,

*What people have inherited from their parents, their habits, yes, something from the past, but also something that is being created now by people.  
(pc 27)*

*....culture doesn't necessarily have to be old; it can be modern. (pc 97)*

However, the association with tradition and the past does not necessarily mean that culture is static. Participants also implied that culture was dynamic too,

*I think in part it can come down to some traditions that have been inherited in a place from different pasts to basically our cultural reality now; people coming in with their own practices and traditions but basically it can be formed fundamentally where the original traditions were and augmented by other cultures. (pc 9)*

This notion of people being able to change culture reinforces the argument that place consumers are active in creating their cultural environment.

This previous comment also suggests that culture is about diversity, as was indicated by other respondents too,

*I think it's people from different backgrounds and like I've got a different background but I'm here and you've got a different background and I think that's what it means generally, people with different backgrounds meeting and living together and doing different things. (pc 35)*

However, while focusing on how culture can be distinctive, respondents also spoke about how it is also a socially cohesive force. They identified place as a cohesive force through drawing on the notion of community,

*I guess it's how people live their life, as a community and as a city, as a nation. (pc 67)*

In this case, it is community and a sense of place which act as a common force, bringing people together. Therefore, the culture of a place and its people are closely linked. The identity of a place becomes the identity of the people and vice versa. However, place was sometimes regarded not as a unifying factor, but as a feature of distinction,

*It's like tradition, whatever a place is. It can stand out from any other. (pc 72)*

This again highlights the duality of culture as something which differentiates but which is also based on commonalities, as discussed in previous chapters.

The contrasting aspects of culture can also be identified in respondents' view that it was both inherited and learned. Material culture was thought to be inherited,

*Well, we're sitting here next to the museum and the library and stuff and there's fabulous artworks and all manner of things in the museum which are all sort of the heritage of all things that people have designed, made, changes that have been brought about by people which all go towards being your heritage basically and your culture in my opinion. (pc 36)*

However, respondents tended to believe the behavioural aspects of culture were learned,

*If I was to learn a different culture basically it would be learning everything new and how they express themselves. (pc 58).*

On the whole, while culture was considered by some to be found only in museums and galleries, others believed it to be all pervasive,

*Culture is everything that is around that people do. (pc 54)*

### **6.2.2 Summary**

According to participants' responses, culture can be about people, place or art. However, culture is not necessarily considered as belonging exclusively to any of these. Respondents indicated, for example, that strong relationships existed between place, people and culture or people, art and culture. Culture was defined in terms of something that is both produced and consumed. People were seen as central to these processes, therefore establishing culture as a human construction. On the whole culture was defined by various terms. More static, traditional definitions of culture were often challenged and it was therefore recognised that culture could be defined in a subjective manner. Overwhelmed by the many possible meanings of culture, some respondents were unable to provide a definitive term, whereas others suggested that while there were other possible interpretations, their own understandings of what culture was were the most relevant to them. Underlying respondents' explanations were a number of dualisms which seemed to further complicate the definition of culture. Culture was about both the past and the present, it could be both static and dynamic, it could reflect diversity or commonality, and could be learned or inherited.

## **6.3 Defining the Culture of Liverpool**

Considering how respondents defined and understood culture in abstract terms was a useful exercise in itself. However, comparing these abstract definitions with how respondents understood Liverpool culture specifically was more revealing. Liverpool's culture was characterised by respondents in terms of four quite broad dimensions. The culture of the city was considered to be represented in characteristics of its people, characteristics of the place, the history of the city and also contemporary cultural activity.

### **6.3.1 The People of Liverpool**

Some respondents considered that the culture of Liverpool is embodied and expressed above all in the people,

*Well, as far as Liverpool goes, it's the people and how they act and what they do. (pc 63)*

Others referred to more specific characteristics which they believed constituted the culture of local people. These included the following:

- Friendliness
- Welcoming
- Humour
- Vibrancy
- Fun
- Creativity
- Defeatist mentality
- Crime / antisocial behaviour
- Poor reputation
- Solidarity
- Ethnic diversity
- Accent

### ***Friendly and Fun***

The people's friendly and welcoming attitude, their humour and fun spirit, were emphasised in particular,

*Nowhere can be perfect, but here, the humour and friendliness here is second to none. It's astounding. Especially in London, the capital, you could live there for 18 months.... and nobody would say hello to you. You stand in a pub in Liverpool and you wouldn't be here 2 or 3 minutes and someone would make a wise crack or make you feel at home....that's part of the culture obviously. (pc 17)*

*But that's what Liverpool culture means to me. It's the native wit. You've got a great comic pool coming out of Liverpool.....You've got very witty people who are always trying to take the mick out of things and that's what I like. That's culture more than paintings or gothic cathedrals or anything like that. (pc 75)*

These aspects of Liverpool's culture were recognised not just by locals but by visitors who tended to describe the culture of Liverpool by comparing and contrasting it with that of other place cultures. Cities are often associated with anonymity, but, these respondents described Liverpool culture not as alienating but as welcoming.

### ***Cultural diversity***

Apart from the general picture of Liverpool as a friendly place, another aspect of its culture which was emphasised by respondents was its cultural diversity and in particular its ethnic diversity,

*Liverpool culture is a mix of everything, different cultures from everywhere all mixed into one. (pc 21)*

*I was saying to my husband, when our kids have kids, they'll all be mixed race. It's a fact of the city now, it's just inevitable.... it's just all mixed so I wouldn't just go, 'It's just Liverpool', because your normal everyday Liverpool people are probably only 10% of Liverpool now. (pc 85)*



However, the extent to which Liverpool was considered ethnically diverse was sometimes relative to respondents' experience of living in other places,

*There is a good ethnic mix as well [in Liverpool]. Coming from where we do there's a very small ethnic minority, we've got 0.46. I think I could probably name half of them! It's nice to see that mix of cultures. I mean I was used to it when we lived here but I have actually missed it. In Cumbria virtually every face you see is a white face. For me we're missing some culture in a way. (pc 12)*

*It's not a very multicultural city which is slightly disappointing. Having lived in London for a long time it is quite strange to see a sort of mono-cultural environment. But I don't know if that's about representation. It's a little bit weird that there's not an awful lot going on in the Chinese community. You'd expect them to feature more being the oldest Chinese community. So that's a bit odd but then maybe I'm just.....but it feels a bit segregated. (pc 92)*

Liverpool's ethnic diversity was in part attributed to the welcoming nature of its people,

*It's made up of all different nationalities and I suppose that's good because Liverpool people welcome everyone. (pc 2)*

On the whole Liverpool was considered to have accommodated and integrated its ethnically diverse population well,

*It's a mix of cultures. It's a great amalgam of all different races which by and large get on with each other generally.....Lots of immigrants have been here for generations and they are part of the culture and the culture in Liverpool is probably better for it. (pc 36)*

The ethnic diversity in the city was also seen to be expressed in the increase of its ethnic restaurants,

*I mean all we used to have years ago was the curry houses, the Indians, but now you've got Portuguese restaurants you've got Turkish restaurants, you've got Spanish restaurants and that as well to a certain extent, I'd say that is part of the culture as well. (pc 48)*

Although Liverpool was generally perceived as culturally well integrated, it was recognised that not everybody in the city was so tolerant and that racism was a problem,

*I suppose if you're asking me what is culture for Liverpool, it's the multiculturalism that we all boast about but we still have pockets of badness that fights against it. We're not all totally accepting. We still have our racists*

*here, but the majority quite like this international thing that we've got. (pc 89)*

Racism was considered to be a problem particularly outside the city centre,

*I think in the city centre it is safe for foreigners, but in the surrounding areas, people don't like foreigners much, maybe just some of them. (pc 27)*

None of the respondents, however, seemed to be sympathetic towards racist views. One respondent in particular believed that an increased presence and expression of different ethnic cultures could increase integration and help reduce prejudice. At the time of interview he was watching an event in the city centre where different ethnic groups put on performances relating to their indigenous cultures,

*Culture? It's like now, isn't it, like all people from different backgrounds, all different races mixing together. You know, they're putting on a little show there, aren't they? Just things like that. They should have more of that in Liverpool. If there was a lot more of that, you'd have none of that racial crap like what happened last year. (pc 87)*

The respondent here was referring to the racially motivated murder of Anthony Walker, a black teenager, in Liverpool, which another respondent also spoke about,

*I know that there's a stand against racism so strongly in Liverpool and I noticed at the death of Anthony Walker, there was quite a huge number of people that went there to his funeral and it was the coming together that really did it for me and it moved me to see people from different backgrounds coming to be at the funeral and there was this big stand against racism. And I thought, "Wow, this is really something that speaks out for Liverpool, something good, and I really think that is something we can give out to other cities really." And that is the big positive in that I think we can be able to just say, "This is what we do in Liverpool, we are united, we stand together as one". (pc 35)*

Concluding this point on ethnic diversity, it was clear that it was seen as something which was accepted as part of the culture of the city, as something which enriched the culture of the city and which in fact needed to be cultivated and utilised further,

*Yes, definitely where I live it's very mixed in terms of the cultures in the community so I think that brings a lot of enrichment into the city. It brings a lot of ideas and lots of positive things into the city and that is perhaps not being harnessed enough and utilised enough. (pc 25)*

## **Crime and Anti-social Behaviour**

Another aspect of Liverpool culture which participants commented critically upon was its association with crime and anti-social behaviour,

*I don't know what culture is Liverpool. It used to have a culture but I don't think it has now. Maybe if you go back to the 60s, time of The Beatles, it was a Liverpool city and everybody was John, Paul, George or Ringo and there was more of us. It's funny in that respect that everybody wanted to be John, Paul, George or Ringo and now everyone wants to be gangsters, I think. It seems to be the case. (pc 8)*

Nonetheless, while crime was seen to be part of the life of the city, it was not part of everybody's experience,

*...there's been quite a lot of shootings at the moment. I'm comparing what I hear or see on TV, but nothing like that has ever affected me or anyone I know, or the area where I live, so...I think wherever you live, there's going to be aspects of the city and the culture that you don't know or see at all. It could be a blessing in disguise. (pc 61)*

Therefore, the association of crime with Liverpool's culture was seen to be relative. Not everyone in the city was believed to be involved in crime and certain communities were thought to be more affected than others. This suggests that different parts of the city have different cultures which may not necessarily be part of everyone's culture. Furthermore, it was also considered to be a phenomenon which was not specific to Liverpool but which was part of British urban culture in general as this respondent indicates,

*There are some things that I don't like about Great Britain and Liverpool. For example, I don't like the crime that is here, young teenagers who are really dangerous. (pc 27)*

Respondents, especially locals, attributed the stereotypical perception of Liverpool as particularly afflicted by crime, to the media,

*It's blown all out of proportion. In some cases, ok, but the media's got a lot to do with it. (pc 42)*

*Well really it comes from things that you see on the telly like a lot of the comedians that come from Liverpool and various sketches that take the mickey.....but you try and ignore it because it's like watching Eastenders and saying that that's how all Londoners live, it just isn't the case. You have to take it as you find it. But I don't think people in Liverpool live up to the bad side of the stereotype. (pc 44)*

Another respondent admitted,

*....it's got some horrible people, course it has.....but I'd rather be in trouble in this city than in another city because I know 99.9% of the people will help you, whereas elsewhere they wouldn't, they'd walk past. (pc 17)*

This sense of solidarity was referred to by a number of respondents as an integral part of Liverpool culture which highlights the socially cohesive nature of culture in the city and counteracts any negative image.

### **Creativity**

Respondents also discussed the culture of Liverpool in terms of the pioneering and creative spirit of its people. This was a view shared by both people from Liverpool and others,

*Again like, I'll go back to the music there, the culture, The Beatles, they put Liverpool on the map, didn't they? They were a phenomenal band and they just opened the doors to what Liverpool people and more importantly northern people could achieve because before The Beatles you never really heard four northern blokes being really successful. It was all, 'Thespians, my dear' and people were taught diction and how to speak properly and all that. It just broke down the barriers for a lot of normal people to pick up guitars and get into acting. (pc 75)*

Nonetheless, while Liverpool people were considered on the whole to be quite creative, some participants also referred to the defeatist mentality that was also associated with the people of Liverpool,

*I was talking about this the other day, this is really controversial, but all the stuff that Boris Johnson said about Liverpool feeling victimized and never ever taking responsibility for what it's like and how people's lives are here and people won't accept that, but that is actually the truth of a lot of people in the city. It's 'Oh, woe is me. We're Scousers. Everybody hates us, so we can't get anywhere. We can't do anything. Nobody will support us in our creative work. I can't do this because I'm from L8 or I can't do this because, blah, blah, blah', and I feel for those people and it's insidious in the city. It just grows out of the City Council and it's just spread all over to everybody and there really needs to be, I don't know how it would happen, but a total mindset change for Liverpool to not become swallowed up and lose its identity and the people that are left to just be bitter about it. (pc 60)*

### **Cultural Change**

The paradoxical nature of the culture of Liverpool was an issue which intrigued a number of respondents, most of whom accounted for it in terms of a cultural shift which

was taking place in the city but also in terms of the different forms and levels of culture which existed,

*I think now is a difficult time to describe it because there's a massive culture shift. I think before 08, lots of people's opinion of Liverpool was quite stereotypical. It was mostly just like The Beatles and the football teams and what they associate the people of Liverpool to be like, Scousers and stuff. But I think now, people are taking notice more and they're looking past all those connotations and seeing all the things that Liverpool can offer for people. (pc 77)*

*I think Liverpool is a city of....it's a complete dichotomy. I think Liverpool is a city that doesn't really understand its own identity and it's told what it is a lot. It's lost between what it tries to be and then what it won't let itself be. (pc 60)*

Once again, the culture of Liverpool appears to be partly defined by people's perceptions of it and especially those portrayed in the media. Therefore, while the culture of Liverpool is produced by the people in the city, it is also defined by its external representations, whether real or imagined.

### **6.3.2 Liverpool's Place Culture**

Some respondents thought of Liverpool culture as being part of the place rather than of the people. They referred to certain features that were characteristic of the city which include:

- Liveliness
- Diversity
- Uniqueness
- Standard features
- Historic buildings
- Modern buildings
- Cultural attractions
- Magical atmosphere
- Compactness

#### *Unique or Standardised?*

Some of these attributes are actually characteristics of the people which become part of the place. For example, Liverpool is seen as having a certain atmosphere which in essence the people create, but this was considered part of the fabric of the city.

*I just think of it as a marvellously diverse place and there's something about the atmosphere of Liverpool that is lively, friendly, happening. (pc 22)*

*I think of a magical vibe, a magic, a strange magic.....it's special, it is a very special place. (pc 37)*

In addition, Liverpool was seen as quite a diverse place. While they thought of it as quite compact for a city, respondents also believed there was lots to do,

*..there is always stuff going on basically (pc 18)*

Some respondents liked the fact that the city centre was made up of different areas which made it more interesting,

*I think the city is made up of a lot of different zones and I like passing from one zone to the other. (pc 25)*

Sometimes respondents perceived the culture of the city quite differently. Some thought that Liverpool was unique,

*It's a bit quirky. It's just unique. (pc 88)*

*Well it's quite different to anything I've seen around so it definitely has a culture of its own. (pc 57)*

However, others considered the city to be quite standardised,

*Well really it's just like any other city centre. What it's got is clothes shops, bars, shops....." (pc 3)*

*I've only been here for a few hours and I've only seen what I could see in London so far. (pc 71)*

According to these respondents, Liverpool as a physical entity did not differ much from other British cities.

However, a large number of respondents thought that the cultural attractions were a major part of Liverpool's culture. Some participants mentioned these in general, whereas others perceived some attractions to be particularly significant, yet not widely recognised,

*...of course we have got the Tate which apart from London and St Ives is nowhere else in the country so I think that is good. (pc 29)*

*We are good on the arts and people don't think we are but I think we've got a good art gallery in William Brown Street. It's marvellous I think. We've got the library, it's all culture isn't it. (pc 32)*

Others highlighted that while Liverpool produced and offered a considerable amount of highbrow culture, popular culture, which was not necessarily recognised as 'culture', was also represented in the city,

*I think the danger is we hear the word culture and we think about highbrow stuff. Now Liverpool's got lots of that, it's got the Philharmonic, it's got the theatres. It's got a wonderful offer when it comes to the highbrow stuff but it's got a very strong musical heritage, you've got the whole tradition of the sea and I think if you just alter your perceptions about how you consider culture, you can see Liverpool in lots of different ways. So I think it's got a lot to offer. (pc 78)*

For some it was the lived cultures that the attractions represented, rather than the attractions themselves, which really defined the culture of Liverpool,

*We grew up in the sixties. We were from the Scotland Road area, it's near the dock road and on the right hand of the street everybody was Catholic and on the left hand of the street everyone was protestant and I had a friend on the other side of the street and the way we lived was just different. I think we're supposed to think that culture is sitting on the steps outside the Cathedral and then going to the little coffee shop at the bottom and watch the world go by, but for me it's that diversity, the different ways of life. (pc 24)*

### *Modern or Historic?*

The cultural attractions were also significant in defining the culture of the city as modern or historic. A number of respondents considered Liverpool to have both historic and modern features which was seen as positive by most,

*It's modern. I mean this place we're in now, it's a brand new shopping centre and there's going to be all other new shopping centres. Then it's got the history as well, hasn't it? The waterfront and all the old buildings. (pc 3)*

Others however, had the impression that modern structures were less meaningful and therefore somehow lacked culture,

*Old buildings are interesting. Old buildings are connected with the history. You can imagine something about the history. They mean something. Modern ones are without meaning. They can only be pretty. (pc 20).*

From respondents' comments it appears that the 'city' is a major part of Liverpool's culture. Cultural attractions are regarded as an essential part of this. However, what actually constitutes a cultural attraction is to some extent subject to interpretation. Furthermore, the findings indicate that people are integral to the meaning of the city and its material culture.

### **6.3.3 Liverpool's History**

Some respondents believed that Liverpool's culture was embedded in its history. The main historical references which were mentioned were:

- Maritime heritage
- Poets
- Actors
- Playwrights
- Music (especially The Beatles)
- Riots

#### ***Maritime Heritage***

Liverpool's maritime heritage was the historical aspect of the city's culture most referred to,

*I think it's all about history, culture. It's a mixture of things but I think a lot of it is to do with history and I think Liverpool has got quite a bit of culture going back to the early days and shipping and things like that. (pc 46)*

It is seen as an iconic part of Liverpool's culture,

*Without the heritage the city wouldn't be looked upon as it is. The Liver Birds, the Liver Building and things like that, the River Mersey, it's all important to the city. It's the first things you see on a postcard or on a poster. It's those things, isn't it? Probably the main thing is the heritage. (pc 99)*

Historic buildings, especially those associated with the slave trade, were mentioned as a defining element of Liverpool's maritime heritage, although residents were not particularly proud of this,

*We've got lovely old buildings, some of these are 700 or 800 years old. Castle Street is the oldest street in Liverpool, that's 7 or 800 years old. It does have a long history, mainly based on the exploitation of others really like the slave trade. We should be ashamed of our past really but I never done it, it's not me, it was our forefathers. But the history is still here like the Exchange Flags, there's images on the wall there, the Midland Bank, that's how a lot of banks made their money really, from the slave trade. (pc 14)*

#### ***Creative Talent***

Another aspect of Liverpool's culture that was referred to was its history of creative talent. Some respondents were aware of Liverpool's tradition of poets, actors and playwrights. Needless to say The Beatles were a major cultural reference,

*Well the culture of Liverpool, it's got to be The Beatles, hasn't it? (pc 80)*



However, some respondents perceived that Liverpool's musical heritage was much broader than this,

*Well obviously you've got the great tapestry of musical history. You've got the Beatles, you've got Gerry and the Pacemakers, you've got Echo and the Bunnymen, Space. In more recent years now, you've got the Coral, the Zutons, a lot of musical history. (pc 75)*

### **Social History**

However, more general aspects of Liverpool's social history were also considered part of the culture,

*It's just everything. It's like the history of Liverpool. Even like Toxteth, even like the uprising in the '80s. (pc 91)*

Clearly then, respondents recognised quite diverse aspects of Liverpool's history as constituting part of its culture.

### **6.3.4 Contemporary Cultural Activity In Liverpool**

Fewer respondents considered Liverpool's culture as the more contemporary activity in the city. However, there were some features which were mentioned in relation to this including:

- Music
- Drama
- Poetry
- Art
- Nightlife
- Sport (especially football)
- Comedy
- Fashion
- Universities
- Events

### **The Arts**

The contemporary music scene in particular was thought to be a big part of what Liverpool is about,

*..if someone is visiting and they like a certain kind of music the chances are they will find it. You don't necessarily find that in some cities, they have a closed quarter, they have a certain style of music and that's what they stick to but with Liverpool you get a bit of everything. (pc 18)*

*...the music scene is definitely one of the best in the country. (pc 77)*

In addition, various events and festivals were referred to as an element of local culture,

*I think it's starting to change slowly with the Biennial and things like that which is really positive. (pc 95)*

*Brouhaha and stuff like that is part of the modern culture. (pc 81)*

### **Student Life**

Students were also referred to in relation to the culture of the city, on the one hand being attracted to the culture of Liverpool but also adding to it,

*...there's so many students living here and because they're here, Liverpool's got to accommodate them. So you know things are getting more modern, there are a lot more things for students now, which is good so that's making it modern. (pc 40)*

### **Night Life**

Quite a contentious aspect of the city's culture was the nightlife. Respondents indicated how Liverpool had become renowned for 'a good night out'. However, some participants did not necessarily regard this as positive,

*Culture is a certain way of life, isn't it? It's a certain level of responsibility, it's a certain level of behaviour and I'm afraid in this area in particular the behaviour is unacceptable. There's no culture. Well I suppose to some degree there is but it's of a specific type and with me culture is epitomised by art, music, theatre, poetry, all those and it's epitomised by that. And this of course is booze culture. (pc 65)*

### **Comedy Theatre**

Finally, theatre, especially comedy was also considered part of the contemporary cultural offer of the city,

*...theatres are something that would interest us because of the comedy side of things (pc 26).*

### **6.3.5 Summary**

Liverpool's culture was defined in terms of characteristics of the local people, characteristics of the place, its history and also its contemporary activity. On the whole, there was a strong tendency to think of Liverpool's culture as characterised by its people. Liverpool people were generally associated with being friendly, welcoming, witty and creative. Nonetheless, Liverpool people were not thought of in mono-cultural terms. Ethnic diversity in particular was considered to have a strong influence on the culture of the city. The extent to which Liverpool was thought of as ethnically diverse,

however, differed according to where respondents were from. On the whole it was believed that ethnic diversity was a positive element of Liverpool's culture. However, people from Liverpool were not always portrayed in a positive light. Respondents referred to acts of racism and other criminal acts which were associated with local people. Nonetheless, respondents from Liverpool and elsewhere also explained that the negative stereotypes relating to Liverpoolians were far from a realistic representation. On the whole, people from Liverpool were considered to have distinctive cultural characteristics.

Liverpool, as a place was characterised in cultural terms mainly by its physical attractions but also by a certain "magic" which some respondents believed it possessed. In relation to other cities, the physical aspect of Liverpool was considered unique by some, but not exceptional by others. The extent to which it was modern or historic was also a contentious subject. While many respondents believed Liverpool's culture to be embodied in its history, others did also describe it in terms of contemporary cultural trends in the city. Finally, some respondents found Liverpool culture almost impossible to define, given the recently noticeable shift in the city's cultural identity.

## **6.4 Perceptions of Cultural Development in Liverpool**

Respondents' definitions of Liverpool culture presented above were not always purely descriptive but expressed their feelings concerning cultural issues in the city. Many respondents expanded on these perceptions of Liverpool culture, with a critical evaluation of how local culture was developing. The majority of comments referred to the development of the city's cultural infrastructure and how this impacted on or could impact on the way of life in Liverpool. Respondents also voiced their opinions on how culture was being used as a resource for tourism in Liverpool.

### **6.4.1 Physical Regeneration**

Respondents commented on a number of aspects of physical regeneration in Liverpool. It was strongly felt that the city needed a large concert venue, both to accommodate users' needs but also in order to compete with other cities like Manchester. However, this respondent thought that the then planned facility, which has now been completed, was inadequate,

*I think having a huge concert venue would be a great asset to the city. I think a lot of concerts and huge events are being lost to places like Manchester. I think the development down at Kings Dock, the capacity is not as big as it should be.....We could have had a much bigger venue there, which is a shame. (pc 25)*

Concerning Liverpool's retail offer, a number of participants considered it to be lacking but thought that the planned retail development in the city centre would address this need. Again respondents viewed this development in terms of their own personal needs but also in relation to Liverpool's ability to compete with other cities, in particular Manchester, which already had large retail centres,

*I think at the moment we go to the Trafford Centre because there's a greater variety of shops and it's all in pleasant surroundings....So I think until Paradise Street is built, I think Liverpool will struggle to compete with the centres like Chester and the Trafford Centre and probably Manchester as well. (pc 78)*

However, not all respondents viewed the new retail development in a positive light,

*..well whoever's doing the town planning doesn't appreciate that town's full of beautiful buildings. Like what are they doing there round the corner now. They're building something massive and it's just not necessary. For a city of culture....I thought culture was about identity, history. I mean they seem to be just casting it aside. Especially as you go out of town it becomes more like...it's like an American city. There's all these big out of town shopping places... (pc 38)*

This respondent, among others, considered that the retail development is eradicating Liverpool's sense of place as the traditional built heritage is neglected or knocked down. Other respondents had their own specific ideas of how the urban landscape should be developed, for example,

*I just think the way they've gone about the whole Paradise Street thing is completely wrong. Why should they waste that money on providing more high street stores when they could have provided open spaces and landscaped areas that people could actually use, rather than be forced to come and spend money.....There's no big open spaces where you can sit and go and have a coffee or beer and watch the world go by. (pc 73)*

The following respondent felt that priority should be given to renovating the existing dock warehouses,

*Like the Albert Dock is a great start but along like Clarence Dock and the other docks that's just like waste land. Apart from the Summer Pops, that happens there, you'd never ever go down there. Some of the buildings*

*have just been left to waste and have become derelict and these are listed buildings that will never be destroyed but there's fantastic potential for them to be home to a great venue. (pc 77)*

Another respondent felt that Liverpool One along with new developments around the Albert Dock and Pier Head might detract from the 'Cultural Quarter' of the city,

*It's going to pull the central gravity of the city away from the area with the classic old buildings I think. It might just leave that on the edge, whereas you feel that with those magnificent buildings, that should be the centre. I don't know if that will happen. Maybe on the waterfront is where you want to do new developments and that's where the space is to do it. (pc 82)*

In addition, it was thought that the physical development taking place was perhaps too focused on the city centre and was not being extended to other areas of the city. This view is expressed in the following response,

*It is important to bring people into the city centre but I also think it's equally important...just to distribute that development a bit. (pc 5)*

As some of the comments above also indicate, the physical regeneration of the city or lack of in some cases, was considered to affect not just the appearance and functionality of the city but more crucially the social networks associated with them,

*..it used to be like cafés where people could go, get to know other people, share the work and find out what they were at, what they were doing and now that's all gone and they're all confined to places like the Pilgrim and the Cracke, and what do you have to do there? Drink. Sorry I'm just not into this whole pub business you see. You see when I used to come to town, I used to like Planet X, Duke Street, I used to be a big new romantic, so to me that was my culture, but now there's nothing like that. That's all gone. You've got probably one main club where people can go that aren't into the norm and that's just money, money. (pc 94)*

#### **6.4.2 Representations of Liverpool Culture**

Respondents also suggested that some aspects of Liverpool's culture were under represented while others were over-emphasised. The limited representation of Liverpool's ethnic diversity in the city centre, in terms of people themselves and also their cultures, was an issue which was raised by a considerable number of respondents,

*..there is things to do in terms of arts and music and different types of music but there's not much representation from a multicultural aspect. I*

*mean Liverpool is quite a multicultural city and there's a massive black community here but there's very little evidence of that in town. (pc 73)*

Some respondents, however, justified this with possible explanations like the following,

*It seems quite a white place at times but again that is only in the city centre I don't know about the outskirts. I don't know what percentage of the population are not white. It might just be that there aren't many and that is why they are not represented. (pc 29)*

However, others felt that there were some aspects of Liverpool's cultural heritage which were intentionally played down. This was particularly true of Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade,

*I don't think they want it to be known what a bad past we had really. I suppose everyone knows about it now but it's just sort of brushed under the carpet. (pc 14)*

*..what concerned me the other day was that the Council wanted to change the name of Penny Lane because Penny Lane was named after a slave trader. Well that's history, isn't it? He was a slave trader and they named a street after him. To change that name I think is wicked. History might be bad history, but it's history. You can't go changing things. (pc 47)*

Furthermore, while respondents thought Liverpool had a considerable number of art venues, they felt that local art was not well represented,

*Well I don't think the art scene is very well represented up here....They seem to be getting shows that have been on in the West End and that and everyone's seen so they move it to Liverpool, rather than producing local theatre. And the same with art, you know, it's the Tate Gallery, it gets a few exhibitions a year that are good but I think it could be a bit more localised. (pc 38)*

On the other hand, Liverpool's cultural heritage was perceived to be given too much attention,

*I do tend to get the impression that we tend to live too much in the past and what was. I mean you look at the Albert Dock and you don't see that much activity on the waterfront itself, the Albert Dock all seems to be done in a style to match a period which was a period of great growth but not necessarily relevant to the future of the city.....There seems to be a huge emphasis on the Beatles etcetera etcetera and the 60s in particular which again up to a point does obviously attract people in but again thinking that if you look into the future of 2008 you really should be looking to the future of the city and you just wonder whether the cultural aspects of it are going to focus too high on the city's past and not its future. (pc 7)*

While some respondents had suggested that popular culture was not given enough support, some also felt that high-end culture was not particularly well-represented since local people themselves were reluctant to produce this kind of culture,

*There's this thing that if you're from Liverpool then you've got to work to this kind of standard. You're still grass roots. You can't really go into anything more abstract. (pc 60)*

### **6.4.3 Cultural Engagement and Social Inclusion**

Some respondents felt that people, and especially residents, were engaging more with the culture of the city than previously, as this comment by a local resident suggests,

*I think there is a lot more people getting involved in culture and starting to have a look at the history of the place as well for what it's got to offer. (pc 48)*

Many respondents felt that street events and festivals, in particular, provided an effective means of engaging people and of creating social cohesion, especially among marginalised groups of society. A young Black lady from Toxteth, where a large number of the city's ethnic groups live commented,

*A lot of people from round me don't go into town and they've never been to the museums and stuff. Have you been to Africa Oyé? That's amazing. The atmosphere is really good. I think there should be more things like that. A lot of people from where I live go and all the communities get involved in making the costumes and stuff and it's just a great day out. There's music and children and everyone just has a laugh really. (pc 40)*

Another resident, referring to a street event, remarked,

*People are always in a rush here, as you know. It's different because people are taking time to sit down and have a talk and especially the old ones who just want to have a gab. Any other time no-one's really got any time for them. I think things a bit more like that, they should do more often. (pc 85)*

However, some respondents felt that there were certain barriers which prevented people from engaging with culture in Liverpool. It was evident from participants' responses that levels of engagement depended on the kind of cultural initiatives on offer and their geographical location. The responses below suggest that there was a significant number of people in the city working on their own initiative to produce culture,

*I think a lot is going on in certain areas of Liverpool but it's not necessarily filtering through to all the areas. Having said that, communities are really active and I've not been to a community where there isn't some group that's trying to do something but I suppose the big picture is concentrated in certain areas rather than on everyone. (pc 5)*

*The city has a great deal to offer people but we just need to get people into the city. Once we get them in there, there's a lot of people who are proud of the city and want to show people what we can all do. There are a lot of festivals in this city which are run by people as hobbies, and they are world class festivals but these people are hobbyists. (pc 16)*

There seemed to be a feeling that more should be invested in this kind of more autonomous cultural activity.

Economic capital was another factor believed to account for lack of engagement in culture. It was felt that economic activity was benefiting a few at the expense of the dissemination of cultural activity for the general public. One respondent expressed this as follows,

*So to me it just seems that Liverpool is just sucking money out of whatever they like just to profit the small few. So unfortunately that's the way I look at it and culture to me is just getting squeezed out. It's not for the people any more it's just for the minority. I mean all the money, if you actually walk out of the city centre a bit further, it stops, you can see where it stops and that's my truthful opinion, I mean I just don't think there is a culture any more. (pc 94)*

Another thought was that there was inadequate funding especially for the cultural engagement of the youth,

*Why do you think we've got this ASBO generation? It's because there's not the fundamental finance being provided. The funds aren't provided at grass roots level to give some interest therefore creating apathy. If you go out on the streets, 9 people out of 10 can name the contestants out of the Big Brother house but not name you one member of the House of Commons, including Tony Blair. I find that dumbfounding. (pc 75)*

Other respondents considered this to be a more complex issue but thought that this issue was not insurmountable,

*There are a lot of people who say popular culture isn't represented very well and there could be more community culture. I think those are two separate things. I think you can get communities involved in so-called high culture and you don't have to invent a kind of second-class cultural offer. I*



*think you ought to encourage people to visit the stuff that's really good and find ways to make that easy. (pc 92)*

*The Open Eye Gallery is not bad for a photography gallery but it's quite intimidating to go in if you were just visiting Liverpool, but the FACT I think is quite an open place and the fact that it's got a cinema in it warms people towards it because they are used to a cinema environment so they'll go in because there's a gallery there. (pc 59)*

Finally, respondents also found the lack of publicity regarding cultural events and venues contributed to low levels of engagement,

*..people still don't know about these events and what is going on. How that is tackled I don't know. Maybe the local press and media could become more involved. I mean like everything, they do have their favourites. If you are in the know you will get newspaper space, if not.... (pc 16)*

#### **6.4.4 European Capital of Culture**

Many respondents associated cultural development in Liverpool with its status as European Capital of Culture.

*....a lot of the cultural aspects have been, well, probably since we got the Capital of Culture, they've been sort of amplified more. There's fly posters out of the cultural arts and its environment. You know performance, art, all things like that have been more amplified. (pc 96)*

However, certain aspects of the city's regeneration were wrongly attributed to this. For example, this respondent states,

*I think there should be more focus on the cultural side of things rather than just opening big retail outlets. (pc 59)*

The retail development in the city is not due to Liverpool's Capital of Culture status. However, other respondents were aware that a lot of the activity and regeneration in the city was taking place independently of Capital of Culture,

*I think people thought "Whoop-de-doo, we're going to get Capital of Culture so everyone's going to get loads of funding", and that's not the case at all. It's about bringing investment into the city, which is obviously a good thing but.....Think about the Culture Company itself, there's lots of chiefs and no Indians, so they're not actually doing anything, they're just going round, finding what people are doing already and slapping a logo on it. That's a really negative way of looking at it and you can see they're raising the awareness of what's actually going on. (pc 60)*

or as an effect of this status,

*There seems to be a lot going on because of that but I don't know if that's a result of getting that status in the first place. Either way, it can only be a good thing as far as I can see. (pc 43)*

Other respondents, however, felt that more cultural organisations in Liverpool should be working independently of the city's Capital of Culture programme,

*It's only really FACT and a couple of small galleries that are doing stuff independent of the Capital of Culture really and I think they need to grasp what's going on and take control of it and do some stuff. (pc 59)*

On the whole, respondents were quite critical of the way that Capital of Culture was being managed in Liverpool. This respondent refers to a theatre event which was organised by Liverpool Culture Company in one of the themed years running up to 2008,

*They have just put on a show that attracted 600 people it was supposed to attract 6000. There was a major team in place to put that show on and they could only sell sort of 300 tickets. Now if they're the people running Capital of Culture 2008 what sort of faith have you got in their abilities to do that job? (pc 16)*

Many respondents felt that Capital of Culture should have been run by local people. This respondent refers to a particularly controversial matter when an Artistic Director was brought in from Australia only to resign a short time afterwards,

*I do think there's certain people doing a lot for it and then I do think they've wasted a lot because why did they hire that woman and then she goes and packs in. It's stupid, isn't it? Why didn't they hire someone from Liverpool who knows what it's about? (pc 45)*

Others thought that too much money was being spent on planning for Capital of Culture and that there wasn't really any apparent justification for this because there were no significant plans that they were aware of, whereas more could be invested in improving the existing cultural infrastructure of the city,

*I haven't seen anything that's really changed. Whether it's just that the publicity isn't that great or...because nothing significant has been planned at the moment it's just all those buildings that have come up because they've got a significant budget but then millions are spent on endless meetings for them so I think it's been a bit of a disappointment and if they don't pull something out of the hat it could be a bit of an embarrassment. But I mean we've got good theatres here and good restaurants and amazing buildings which don't seem to be upheld that much so I suppose there is culture here but I think they could do a lot more about improving it definitely. (pc 95)*

Some respondents were particularly vociferous in their reactions to the way Capital of Culture was being organised,

*It could be improved by not lying to the people and by telling them what's really going on instead of giving money to what they think is culture. (pc 94)*

However, other respondents realised that organising a cultural celebration of this scale presented quite a challenge and it would be difficult to produce something that pleased everyone,

*I think the thing with this whole thing is there is more than one definition of what culture actually is...which is why in a way I was for Liverpool City of Culture thinking what is culture?, because I was pretty sure that whatever it was going to represent was not necessarily something I will recognise. If you're going to have a festival of it, it has to be celebrating art, literature, music, communities. It has to be showy to be honest, to encourage people to come they want to see something; they want you to put a show on. Sometimes that doesn't always reflect how you personally view the city or yourself within it. (pc 7)*

Another major issue surrounding Capital of Culture was the lack of involvement of local people. As with the cultural offer in general, there was contention as to whether high brow culture or more popular culture should be represented through Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme,

*Some of the stuff I have read about it is quite high brow and a lot of people I have spoke to, some creatives, they are a bit miffed that the money is going to high brow art rather than buskers and stuff like that what people enjoy, like what a crowd from Williamson Square would enjoy rather than a crowd that already goes the Playhouse or the Empire to see shows and stuff. (pc 34)*

Some stressed the fact that local communities were not being involved in the planning process or the events themselves. There was also perceived to be a lack of communication with the public concerning events that were being planned,

*I don't think the public are being engaged enough. That's where there's a lot of wealth of ideas from different communities that could make the 2008 celebrations a great success. I'm a bit worried at the minute because I don't think enough is being done to connect people. I know every year they had a theme which on the face of it seemed like a great idea but you just don't hear enough about it. (pc 25)*

The following participant, who lived in one of the more deprived areas of the city, believed that Capital of Culture was aimed at tourists and he was therefore completely indifferent,

*I don't even know what it is. To be quite frank I'm not interested in it. It's just out-of-towners who will benefit. (pc 14)*

Others felt that the image created by some people was not compatible with the title of Capital of Culture,

*I mean one of the problems with Liverpool really is that it's still a bit rough. City of Culture is fine but if it's still going to be streets full of drunken people I don't know how that's going to benefit. (pc 79)*

Despite the negative attitudes towards Capital of Culture presented above, the majority of respondents felt that the accolade would be significant in repositioning Liverpool, as described below,

*I think with cities like London it's got a definite identity and definite areas with definite identities. I think Liverpool is still reforming. I think after Capital of Culture it will have a more solid identity. That's what it's all about really, giving it a solid brand, for tourists and stuff so more people will come and visit. At the moment it's just like a Beatles box, it's very much marketed around The Beatles. (pc 28)*

For many, it was also clear that the impact of Capital of Culture would reach beyond tourism to other areas of the economy,

*I'm a self-employed personal trainer and I think the type of people that it's bringing in are people with more money, so it is a benefit to me because they're people with spare money who can pay me to train them. (pc 98)*

The impact of Liverpool's Capital of Culture status on the image of the city was in fact verified by the following statement,

*It's impacted on me personally because I've come up to do a job, partly because of 2008 so I think without that I'm not sure if I would've moved up from Cambridge, moved house to a city that I didn't know anything about if it hadn't been for the fact that it is going to be Capital of Culture, I'd be a bit cynical. And before I moved up here I didn't realise how great the city was so it was that extra thing that made me think, "Yes, let's do it." (pc 92)*

#### **6.4.5 Development of Liverpool as a Tourist Destination**

Respondents commented extensively on the increasing development of Liverpool as a tourist destination over recent years. Many had noticed a significant increase in the number of tourists in the city as the following remark indicates,

*You just have to look at the number of people around and the different languages and accents that you hear to see it's attracting people from all over the place. (pc 7)*

The development of tourism was also thought to be reflected in the growing number of attractions in Liverpool, as this resident comments,

*Well the Albert Dock for one, the museums, just like the bars and the shops, the restaurants and the arena, that'll be a massive place people will want to visit in 08, the Kings Dock that is, isn't it? So, yes there are places that people will want to go to but it's not just about the places you visit, it's going to be the atmosphere and the scenery and the people you meet and just all those things. (pc 77)*

However, the above comment also indicates that the physical infrastructure is only one aspect of what makes Liverpool attractive. The following respondent explains this in more detail,

*It's just the people, the people are fundamental to everything about Liverpool. I've never met people so warm and self-effacing and very witty but in a nice way and for any tourist coming over, they'll always be pointed in the right direction by a Liverpudlian, they'll never be led up a blind alley. Maybe that's generalising and idealistic but by and large people always want to help you out and I think in a tourist destination that's few and far between. (pc 75)*

On the whole, culture, however it was defined, was considered to be the major attraction for tourists in Liverpool,

*So if they don't come for culture, what else do they come for? They don't come for egg on toast (laughs) or a chip buttie, they come for culture, so....and this is what Liverpool has got. (pc 96)*

Yet, while there appeared to be a general feeling amongst respondents that Liverpool was progressing as a tourist destination, there were several aspects which they believed could be improved. Some respondents were under the impression that tourism had still not really taken off in Liverpool,

*(Respondent 1) I feel that there's a lot of potential but it doesn't really....it's not quite buzzing. That was the impression I got from Liverpool Lime Street,*

*in front of the Walker Gallery and the Museum there. The buildings are there and everything but it doesn't seem to be quite as active as it could be.*

*(Respondent 2) Yes, it doesn't sort of.....you feel you want them to say, "Welcome to Liverpool", as you come out of Lime Street, you know because as a tourist....I mean I felt quite excited about coming to Liverpool for the day and they don't seem to actually be catering so much for tourists.....I think they could just be a little bit prouder of what they've got, say, 'Come on, we've got this, this, this and this.' Let's have a few Beatles songs playing as you come out of Lime Street. I don't care. It's corny but it's...that's what tourists want, you know." (pc 82)*

Another issue which was raised was the fact that the city centre is quite compact. For some respondents this was considered to be an advantage, but others interpreted this in a negative way,

*In the travel guide they say that you can see Liverpool in one or two days. I think that in one day it's enough so tomorrow we will maybe go to Manchester. (pc 93)*

The fact that some respondents felt there was a limited number of attractions to visit could be due to the fact that emphasis has been placed on developing and promoting the city centre rather than the city as a whole, as a few other respondents pointed out,

*I think there's a lot of things to come and look at but it's only in the city centre, people only know about the city centre, they don't really know about anywhere else. (pc 40)*

It was also considered that information provision was not as effective as it should be. Despite the city being quite compact, it was evident that visitors had difficulty finding their way round,

*I think signage is a real issue, for newcomers to the city it's really difficult to find your way around because you don't know where anything is. All the signs are a completely different design so that's always an issue. (pc 92)*

In fact, on the whole it was felt that Liverpool was underpromoted, thus reducing its potential as a tourist destination,

*Liverpool needs to have more advertisements. London, I hear about it everywhere but not Liverpool. Liverpool FC, yes, but people don't know about the city, so I think that good advertisement will help. (pc 23)*

Furthermore, while respondents believed Liverpool had appeal as a tourist destination, they considered what was on offer to be limited in certain ways. A number of respondents' gripes were common to those expressed in relation to Liverpool's cultural

offer. Firstly, respondents criticised the emphasis on Liverpool's past and especially the Beatles. Secondly, other respondents felt that there was not enough provision for visitors with children. Thirdly, some respondents perceived there to be a lack of activity especially in the early evening,

*It probably needs to have more going on in the evening, more persistently, which is especially important for the cultural side of it. (pc 92)*

In addition, the issue of homogeneity amongst urban destinations was also referred to,

*I think it's got quite a lot but I personally think they're just trying to make it like every other city. You know, they should try and make it unique rather than just trying to copy what Manchester do or Leeds do. (pc 73)*

Finally, other respondents felt that while the city had potential as a tourist destination, anti-social behaviour amongst locals was off-putting for tourists, a point which has been addressed in this chapter concerning the appeal of the city as a whole.

Nonetheless, despite the overall feeling that tourism was becoming of increasing significance for Liverpool, not all respondents were convinced about its development,

*Tourism is alright but you need the bread and butter people, people in the services. People have got to travel in and travel out and the parking is ridiculous. (pc 4),*

thus highlighting the tension between residents' and tourists' needs which is a recurrent issue associated with tourism development.

#### **6.4.6 Summary**

From interviewees' responses it is clear that Liverpool's cultural regeneration is a contested topic. While some respondents were pleased with the physical regeneration of the city, others felt that the new developments did not meet their needs and that opportunities to renovate existing buildings were being overlooked. These changes were considered to have reverberations on the appearance and functionality of the city but also on social networks within it. In terms of cultural representation, respondents believed that people of ethnic minorities did not feature highly in cultural activity in the city. It was also felt that local art was not supported enough. On the other hand, cultural heritage was perceived to be overemphasised at the price of promoting more contemporary culture.

Respondents sensed that people in Liverpool were becoming more involved in culture, and that festivals and outdoor events were a particularly effective way of increasing engagement and addressing social issues such as racism. It was emphasised that there were communities and individuals working on their own initiative to create cultural activities of this kind. However, participants suggested that barriers such as place of residence, economic status, lack of social and cultural capital and lack of publicity hindered higher levels of engagement.

Liverpool's European Capital of Culture status was heavily associated with cultural development. However, respondents were not always rightly informed as to which initiatives were part of this. On the whole participants were critical of how Capital of Culture was being managed. Major concerns were the amount of money being spent on the Company itself and the lack of involvement of local people. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents felt that the title was having, and would continue to have, a significant impact in terms of creating a more positive image of Liverpool.

In terms of tourism, many respondents commented on the increasing development of Liverpool as a place to visit. Participants referred to the increasing presence of tourists in the city and also the growing tourism infrastructure. However, the extent to which Liverpool was considered to be a successful tourist destination was relative. While many residents had noticed a significant increase in tourism, some visitors felt that tourism and the relevant infrastructure was not so evident in the city. Once again the focus on the city centre and lack of publicity were issues which were raised. As far as attractions are concerned, the limitations referred to were similar to those relating to the cultural offer in general. These included too much emphasis on the past and in particular The Beatles, not enough provision for young families, lack of activity in the evening and standardised attractions. Finally, the prioritisation of tourists' needs over those of residents was also mentioned as a matter of concern.

## **6.5 Discussion**

The interview data presented above reveals some interesting results, some of which are due further attention. Academics from the fields of cultural studies and tourism have to date defined culture in a variety of ways. It has been defined in terms such as material artefacts, codes of conduct and something that exists on many levels. A consensus has not entirely been reached concerning what the definition of culture is.



However, it is generally agreed that culture is not a one-dimensional construct and therefore it is more appropriate to think in terms of cultures rather than just culture (MacCannell, 1999; Meethan, 2000). While this academic debate is certainly essential, it is just as crucial to consider how place consumers themselves understand culture. However, it appears that this question has not been approached in the culture and urban tourism literature.

The findings presented above indicate that respondents in this study gave varying definitions of what they believed culture to be. The majority of responses, however, indicated that culture and the definition of culture are socially constructed. Respondents' comments therefore lead to the conclusion that people are central to what culture is. Culture is a product of the people, be it an artwork, a gesture, a celebration and so on.

What this chapter and in fact this whole thesis is mostly concerned with, however, is the relationship between culture, people and place. Sharpley (2000) has applied Holt's (1995) typology of consumption practices to the consumption of tourism. The typology indicates how consumption practice can include 'consuming as experience', 'consuming as play', 'consuming as integration' and 'consuming as classification'. This model can also be applied more generally to the consumption of place. Within the findings presented above, it has been highlighted how the consumption of culture in the urban tourist landscape can represent an opportunity to experience, to socialise, to integrate through a process of assimilation or to classify oneself as a means of social distinction. From this perspective, the emphasis is placed on how a place is consumed, however, it is also important to establish what it is that is consumed. The findings above show that the consumption of culture within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape can take place on three levels. These are as follows:

1. The consumption of material goods, for example, shopping, food, drink
2. The consumption of experiences connected with a particular establishment, staged event or location, for example, a museum visit, a concert, a walk
3. The consumption of immaterial / social attributes unconnected to particular establishments or locations, for example, the friendliness of people, the multicultural profile, a sense of belonging, social relations.

It is important to stress that none of the categories are exclusive. For example, the consumption of material goods is often combined with some kind of social experience.

The consumption of a particular cultural experience can also be accompanied by the consumption of an immaterial attribute associated with the culture (for example, a sense of belonging or a memory from the past). In this sense, even the static elements of culture that are consumed are not necessarily fixed in a particular location or time. The fluidity of these constructs is something that Sharpley (2000:388) also emphasises. However other tourism typologies have failed to encapsulate this important aspect of the tourism or leisure experience. Importantly, together these typologies highlight the fact that what people consume and the ways in which they consume can vary even though the overall object of consumption may be the same.

The issue of agency is also particularly pertinent here. There are different levels of intentionality in the consumption of these various aspects of culture. There is also a distinction between the 'official' and 'unofficial' production of culture, 'official' production being that endorsed specifically by the city's cultural establishments and place marketing agencies, and the 'unofficial' relating to more spontaneous expressions of culture such as the actions of street performers or members of various subcultures. This more spontaneous cultural activity can be considered as autonomous from the institutionalised and structured notion of what culture is and how it should be practised. Another element of the equation, so to speak, is the act of the consumer, watching or listening or moving through space without which the experience would be meaningless. As such the production and consumption of culture represent an interrelated, discursive process rather than two separate processes.

Respondents' views on the culture of Liverpool were particularly revealing as far as the relationship between culture, people and place is concerned. Research carried out by Impacts 08 (2007b:3-7) supported the findings presented above relating to how respondents perceived Liverpool culture and how they believed people from outside the city perceived it. Therefore, a body of research is emerging concerning the cultural image of the city.

Nonetheless, this research is not only concerned with how place consumers define Liverpool's culture, but how it relates to their own consumption, or non-consumption of the city's culture. There has been great debate as to how culture and which cultures should be promoted within the context of tourism and leisure (Clarke, 2000; Craik, 1997). The fact that the definition of culture is open to interpretation and, furthermore, that within a city like Liverpool many different cultures and approaches to culture exist,

highlights the complexities which cultural policy must consider. These tensions are evident in respondents' views which will be elaborated upon below. Interestingly, many of the issues and views of the place consumers mirror those of the service providers discussed in the previous chapter.

The cultural significance of ethnic diversity was especially emphasised by people living in Liverpool. In this sense, culture was sometimes seen as something belonging to somebody else or something that signified distinction. In addition, respondents, especially those who seemed to consider themselves working class, often referred to culture as something that the middle class do. Therefore, again culture was considered to be something that relates to other people not to themselves. In fact, very few respondents explicitly acknowledged that they were doing something cultural. So, while respondents often gave quite broad definitions of what culture was, when considering their own participation in the cultural life of the city, they often reverted back to quite narrow understandings of what culture is.

On the whole, culture had positive connotations amongst respondents. Negative aspects of culture, for example, anti-social behaviour, although they were initially referred to in relation to the culture of the city, were not explicitly acknowledged as culture when perceptions were discussed in more depth. This suggests that respondents also included some notion of civilised behaviour in their definitions of culture. How cultural heritage has been used as a means to engender pride and social cohesion amongst local residents has been widely commented on by authors in the field (Comer and Harvey, 1991). However, the fact that residents also prefer to dissociate themselves from certain aspects of their heritage has been overlooked. It was clear that some Liverpool residents were keen to dissociate themselves from Liverpool's connection with the slave trade, for example. They recognised that while this period of Liverpool's history produced much of the city's stunning architecture, of which residents are very proud, the element of exploitation which was involved in its construction brings feelings of shame. Nonetheless, while respondents did not wish to be personally associated with the events of the slave trade, they felt that this was part of the heritage of Liverpool and therefore this narrative should be represented in the city. Some felt that official bodies wanted to ignore this aspect of Liverpool's heritage. This is probably due to reports in the local press that local council members wanted to change the names of some streets named after those who were involved in the slave trade. However, at the time of the interviews, the International Slavery Museum which

has now opened within the Maritime Museum at the Albert Dock, was being developed. This resource does in fact document the history of the Slave trade. This is significant since it indicates that some residents are not aware of the cultural provision in the city or they do not feel it is of interest to them.

Respondents also seemed concerned about how the links between tourism and culture were being developed in the city. Social exclusion as a result of this development appeared to be their main concern. Much of the cultural activity in Liverpool is based in the city centre, which due to socio-economic and geographical factors, restricts consumption of culture in Liverpool. If cultural activity was taken to other parts of the city, this could potentially regenerate some of the poorer areas and also encourage people to engage more. Interestingly what most respondents considered as the city's cultural attractions, were also perceived to be the main tourist attractions. The majority of residents admitted that they rarely visited these since they didn't have time or they had seen them before and therefore took them for granted. However, culture in Liverpool was largely defined as the people in the city and their positive characteristics. This too was what many respondents believed was one of the city's greatest assets for tourism.

Festivals and outdoor events were considered to be particularly popular because they involved this social element of the city's culture, and many respondents believed there should be more. From the reactions described in the findings, it is clear that these events are effective at creating community participation and social integration and therefore in this sense culture could be seen as a means of cohesion. While some festivals have often been considered among cultural programmers as lacking sustainability (Swarbrooke, 1999), it has been proven that with minimal support from external bodies, various communities and groups in Liverpool have staged festivals of increasing popularity year after year. However, there was a general feeling that they were under-publicised. With further publicity, these could become even more successful, appealing to both tourists and residents in the city.

Furthermore, what emerges from respondents' comments is that culture is produced in many cases independently from cultural organisations and place marketing agencies. These bodies are purely the facilitators of cultural production and consumption. In Liverpool, culture is much more diverse than is currently portrayed through these facilitating forums. Therefore, if engagement with culture is one of the priorities of these

bodies (Liverpool City Council, 2002; Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a; 2005b), then more diverse and alternate expressions of culture should be included; those which place consumers will be able to identify with. Furthermore, there is not necessarily a need to "manage" culture in the city in this way. Cultural expression often emerges as a spontaneous force which should be encouraged through providing the appropriate support mechanisms but should not necessarily be categorised and forced into some organisational structure.

Finally, another issue that arose from consideration of the findings was the extent to which Liverpool was perceived to have a distinctive culture. Some elements of Liverpool culture were thought to be unique, for example humour was related to both the characteristic of the average Liverpudlian but also the cultural activity that grew out of this. In defining culture many respondents mentioned theatre as an example of a cultural attraction or activity but when defining Liverpool's culture, referred to comedy shows as a particular branch of this that was specific to Liverpool. Some participants did believe that cultural activity in Liverpool and particularly theatre and art was not localised enough. Other social characteristics, however, were considered to be common to other places especially in Britain such as anti-social behaviour and booze culture. In terms of the physical aspect of Liverpool's place culture too, there were examples of both distinction and standardisation. The Liver Building and the River Mersey for example were identified as unique to Liverpool, whereas the shops were thought to be just standard features. There was a growing concern, in fact, that new physical developments in the city were creating a rather anodyne and standardised environment.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to establish what place consumers' definitions and perceptions of culture are in relation to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. From the results discussed above we can conclude that the definition of culture is subject to context and interpretation. Respondents defined culture as a social phenomenon, as certain characteristics of place, and as art in the broader sense. In relation to Liverpool specifically, participants described culture in terms of shared personal characteristics, physical characteristics of the city, the history of the city and contemporary cultural activity in the city. In addition to these definitions, the following themes emerged based on place consumers' perceptions of culture in the city:

- Physical regeneration
- Representations of Liverpool Culture
- Cultural engagement and social inclusion
- European Capital of Culture
- Development of Liverpool's tourism infrastructure

General observations were that Liverpool culture was very diverse and also undergoing a process of transformation. Therefore, for the bodies in charge of cultural development in the city, it is important to understand what people understand culture to be and how it is consumed. On analysing how culture related to the consumption of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, it was found that the culture of the city was consumed in three forms: the consumption of material attributes, the consumption of experiences and the consumption of immaterial or social attributes. However, the consumption of the urban landscape often involved a combination of these.

Especially in relation to the city's recent emphasis on culture and regeneration respondents had distinct views on Liverpool's cultural provision. The main issues raised included the fact that commodified versions of Liverpool's past provided the focus of cultural provision aimed at tourists, which was not always of particular interest to residents. It was recognised by residents in particular that people in Liverpool were engaging in diverse forms of cultural activity but that this was not given the promotion or funding required. Also addressed by respondents was the lack of facilities and activities for youths and families with young children. This was an issue that affected both residents and visitors to the city. However, while it was perceived that more people in Liverpool were becoming engaged in culture, it seems that the traditional socio-economic factors still exist as barriers to consumption.

Furthermore, participants felt that while there was significant development of cultural activity and establishments in the city centre, the outskirts of the city were being neglected. It was suggested that these areas were most in need of cultural initiatives in order to attempt to dilute problems associated with antisocial behaviour. Most respondents recognised that the physical regeneration of the city centre was related to Liverpool's strategy to compete in the 'battle of the cities' (Munck, 2003) as a tourist destination. However, it was also evident from their responses that this development was creating competition between Liverpool's city centre and the outskirts and even between various areas within the city centre.

It was also felt that as a result of the city's economic agenda, Liverpool's leisure culture and the physical appearance of the city were becoming standardised to a certain extent. The culture of the people, however, was still considered to be diverse, both within the population of the city and also in relation to other cities. The celebration of diverse cultures in the form of open events was considered to be a means of tackling issues, such as racism, arising from the diversity of cultures present in the city. Events could engage both performers and audiences, educate people about different cultures and simultaneously provide entertainment for both residents and visitors, therefore creating a unique experience of the city. Furthermore, Liverpool people were largely portrayed as friendly, witty and collectively possessing a sense of solidarity. These attributes were perceived as positive in their ability to create social cohesion amongst residents and to encourage tourism in the city. Therefore, it is clear that people are central to the dynamic culture of Liverpool.

Finally, it was also evident from the findings that the media are extremely significant in shaping perceptions of Liverpool. The image of a city overridden with scallies in tracksuits up to no good was perceived to be to some extent an imagined culture, exaggerated by the media. While this perception was generally approached in a light-hearted manner, the image of Liverpool stigmatised by crime and unsightly landscapes was thought to be one that still existed in the minds of some people outside the city. However, it was felt that cultural regeneration initiatives and especially the city's designation as European Capital of Culture were helping to subvert this negative image. The media also affected the image residents had of their own city since they seemed to rely to a large extent on local press and information channels to find out about developments in Liverpool. However, lack of publicity was also considered a problem in that it limited place consumers' engagement with the urban tourist landscape.

This chapter has provided a contextual framework based on how place consumers perceive culture and its development within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. The following chapters will indicate more specifically how various forms of culture are consumed within this landscape and who consumes them.

## **7. Observing Culture: The Boundaries of Liverpool's Urban Tourist Landscape**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses two of the objectives of this thesis: to identify the consumers of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, and to establish which features of the landscape are consumed and the activities and practices which are related to consumption of these features. The findings presented in this chapter are drawn from a period of participant observation of the five designated sample locations in Liverpool city centre, more specifically: the Cavern Quarter, the Cultural Quarter, the Retail Quarter, Hope Street Quarter and the Waterfront. Extracts taken from the field notes made during the period of observation are used to support and expand on the arguments presented. The focus of the observation was the consumers of the space and the ways in which they consumed the space around them. However, the other physical and social elements of the locations were also taken into consideration. The underlying theory, which involves a combination of structuralism and phenomenology, thus reflecting both the structure of the urban tourist landscape but also the agency of the actors, who both produce and consume it, is particularly evident here.

### **7.2 The Cavern Quarter**

#### **7.2.1 The Profile of the Cavern Quarter**

The Cavern Quarter, named after the club where The Beatles once played, is renowned for this connection. The area consists of pubs, bars, clubs, cafés, shops (including The Cavern Shopping Centre), offices, galleries and some public art. The attractions include The Cavern Wall of Fame, the bricks of which are engraved with the names of bands who played at The Cavern, and the Liverpool Wall of Fame, which features plaques naming number one hits by Liverpool artists. The retail offer is based on the designer market and on Beatles souvenirs.

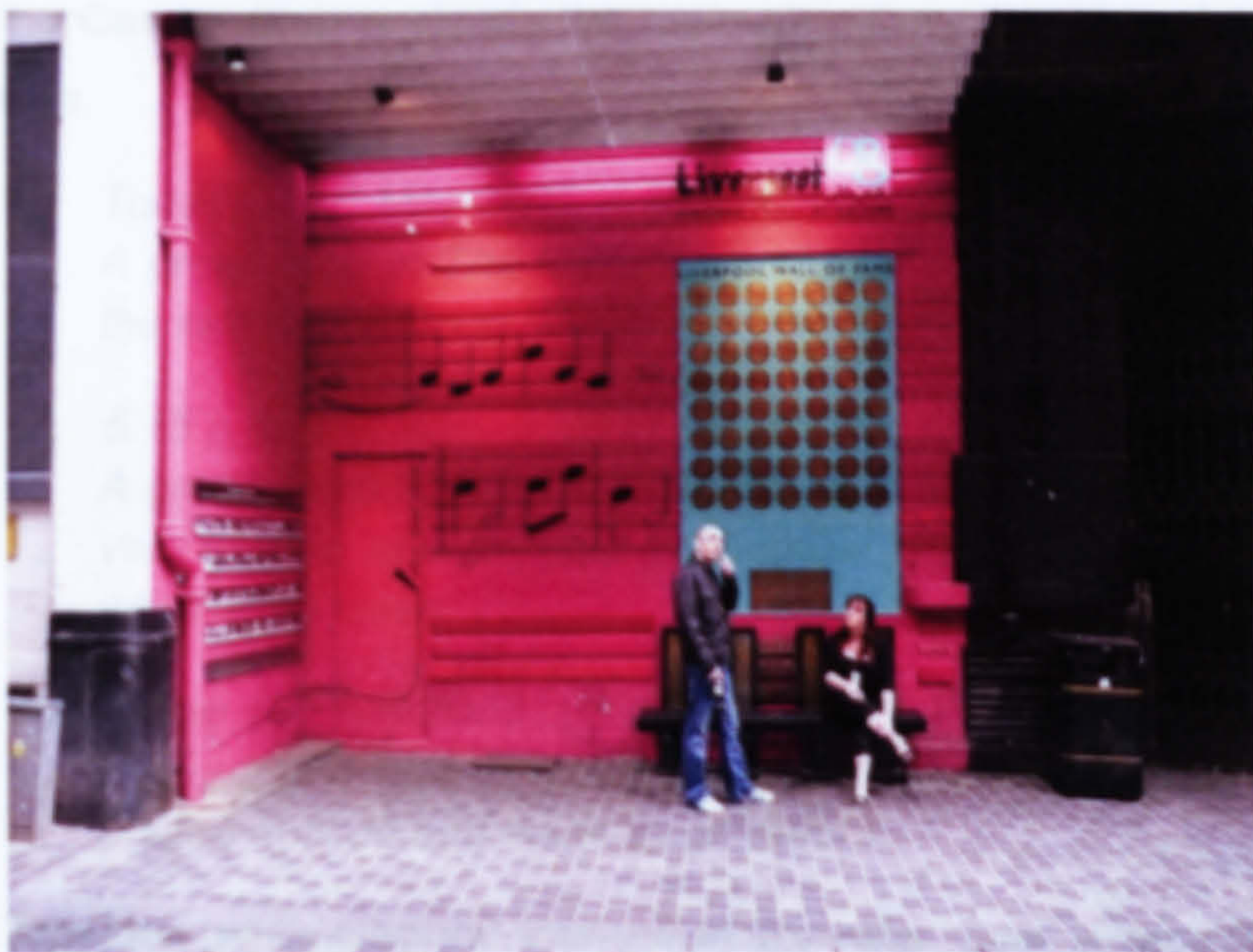
While from observation alone, it was not possible to ascertain an exact profile of the place consumers of the location, there were some characteristics which from repeated observation became particularly apparent. The age of place consumers in this location was quite broad. However, it was apparent that there were not many young children or teenagers here. It was also clear that visitors intentionally sought out this location. Nonetheless, there were not as many visitors as might be expected considering the



significance of this location. Also consumers of this space, apart from the odd exception, tended to be white.



7.1: The Cavern Club



7.2: Liverpool Wall of Fame

### 7.2.2 The Consumption of the Cavern Quarter

The physicality of this location clearly influences visitors' performances. Many of the features are based on Liverpool's musical heritage and The Beatles in particular. At one end of Mathew Street a sign points out to people that they have now crossed the boundary into "The Cavern Quarter, Mathew Street". On entering Mathew Street from the other end, a banner greets visitors, "Welcome to Mathew Street, Birthplace of The

Beatles". Observation of the site showed that it is predominantly visitors who engage with these landmarks and they appear to be intentional consumers, aware of The Beatles legacy before they arrive. When they arrive, their performances appear to be informed with a sense of purpose or at least identification with their surroundings. The following extracts illustrate this point further,

*Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005, 5:00 p.m.*

*A young lady of Asian origin walks up to The Cavern Club holding a map and looking around. She hesitates, and then goes in.*

*Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 4:45 p.m.*

*A group of visitors with American accents get off the Magical Mystery Tour bus, accompanied by a guide. The guide points out the various Beatles attractions and then informs them that this is the end of the tour, and leaves.*

*Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 8:45 p.m.*

*At the top of Mathew Street, a young lady, possibly Spanish, kisses the statue of John Lennon, while the young man with her takes her photo.*

The Cavern Club is clearly the main attraction, to which visitors react in a variety of ways:

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 4:30 p.m.*

*A group stop at The Cavern Club. One man starts singing Beatles songs, the rest of the group take photos then go in.*

*5:15 p.m.*

*A group outside The Cavern Club stop and take photos. One man, clearly very excited, shouts "Paul McCartney". The group look around outside for a while, then leave.*

*Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 11:30 a.m.*

*A group of middle-aged visitors stop and look at The Cavern Club, read the plaque outside and make a comment.*

Therefore, while visitors' interest in this site does appear to be influenced by the conventional scripts of Beatles tourism, their performances are still individualised. However, some performances do not appear to be dependent on the same scripted experience, as the following observation suggests,

*Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:00 a.m.*

*Two middle-aged men, one with a camera, walk down Mathew Street. They briefly look at the Liverpool Wall of Fame as they walk past, then they carry on.*

What cannot be determined from observing them, though, is whether their indifference stems from a conscious "tactical revolt" (Edensor, 2001) or simply ignorance of the significance of their surroundings. Furthermore, while people appear to be attracted by the features of this part of the urban landscape, the majority do not seem to spend much time here. This is less true during the evening when place consumers visit the pubs and clubs more. This suggests that the attraction of the area that has been developed as 'The Birthplace of The Beatles' is somewhat transient.

Furthermore, the data suggest that there is little overlap in the performances of visitors and locals in this area. The cafés, shops and pubs, clubs and bars probably constitute the only common experience for the two groups. However, still these probably differ in meaning. The visitors seem to appreciate the significance of these establishments over and above their functional value, whereas the locals' approach appears to be indifferent or even negative:

*Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 8:15 p.m.*

*Music can be heard coming from The Cavem Club. Outside The Cavem Pub, two visitors speaking a foreign language take photos.*

*A middle-aged man, with a small child, speaking a foreign language, films the area.*

*A middle-aged man comes to the Liverpool Wall of Fame and films it and then The Cavem Club.*

*A young man, holding a camera, comes out of The Cavem Club.*

*A young couple, talking in a local accent, dressed to go out, walk up Mathew Street. "I know a great place to go", says the young man, and they continue out of the Cavem Quarter up onto North John Street.*

*Two young couples, walk up to The Cavem Club. One young lady asks which they should go to, The Cavem Club or The Cavem Pub. One of the young men answers in a local accent, "The Cavem Club is rubbish". Eventually they go in anyway.*

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 4:30 p.m.*

*A group of young people walk past The Cavem Club. One young lady comments, "It always looks so seedy."*

Located behind the central street in this location, the statue of Eleanor Rigby also seems to provide a narrative with which both visitors and locals can engage. However, in this case locals' reaction seems to be more involved, although more incidental, whereas for visitors the sculpture appears to represent more of a missing link on the

map. Furthermore, it tends to be older, local people who engage with the sculpture of Eleanor:

*Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:45 a.m.*

*What appears to be a family of four, walk along Button Street. The father looks over, sees Eleanor and comments, "Oh, that's Eleanor Rigby." The mother shouts excitedly, "Really, are you serious, that's Eleanor?" From their accents they appear to be American. They walk over to where I'm sat on the bench next to Eleanor and the man asks me "Excuse me ma'am, would you mind if I just took a photo of my wife there?" I get up. He takes the photo and his wife and daughter say thank you. He then asks which way The Cavem is. I tell them, they thank me and walk off to find it.*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 3:15 p.m.*

*A young Spanish couple take each other's photo by Eleanor Rigby's sculpture.*

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 10:30 a.m.*

*I'm sat at Eleanor Rigby's statue, an elderly lady passing by, comes over and jokingly comments in a local accent, "I wouldn't sit next to her".*

*Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:30 a.m.*

*I'm sat by Eleanor Rigby, an elderly local man comes over and says, "You don't want to be sitting in her company (pauses) she used to be in Stanley Street and one day she suddenly disappeared and everyone wondered where she'd gone. They said she'd gone off to meet John Lennon."*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 3:30 p.m.*

*Two elderly ladies, come out of BHS café. One comments in a local accent, "Oh, they've put Eleanor here, while they're revamping the Post Office" She goes over to the plaque and reads it, "Yes, she used to be on Stanley Street."*

However, in the case of both visitors and local residents, the statue and the story attached to it become part of their real embodied experience. Even for those who are not necessarily familiar with the significance of the sculpture, it is still able to incite some kind of performance, although not necessarily in the way conceived by the industry:

*Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 1:30 p.m.*

*Four young boys in school uniform go over to the statue of Eleanor Rigby. One starts talking to her. "Nan, you're not coming back to ours," he says, laughing.*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 3:15 p.m.*

*Two young local boys wander over towards the statue of Eleanor Rigby. One comes and sits in the high-backed seat next to the statue and plays*

*out his own performance, "I am the King," he says to the boy with him, "Bring me some wine..."*

On the whole though, it seems that the performances of visitors to this location are largely stimulated by scripts embedded in their consciousness before they arrive. It is the symbolic representations of these narratives which allow them to reinvent these narratives, which for locals seem to be preserved in their everyday consciousness, whereas visitors appear to need a means to make them their own.

However, observation showed that for the most part, consumption of the touristic elements of this space seems to be incidental. During the day, the busiest times are based around office opening and closing times and lunchtime. During these hours, streams of office workers create a buzz of activity as they walk purposefully to or from their offices in the area or the adjacent business quarter. They do not appear to engage with the scripted character of this area:

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 4:00 p.m.*

*Mostly people are just passing through, or coming out of shops and offices. They are not paying much attention to the surroundings.*

*5:00 p.m.*

*Office workers come out of Cavem Court and out of View Two Gallery. A stream of workers enter Mathew Street and walk down the street. This appears to be the busiest time.*

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 9:00 a.m.*

*The main activity revolves around people passing through going to work. There is a steady flow of people.*

*12:00 p.m.*

*The area is getting busier again. Not many people stop, they are just passing through.*

*Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 2:45 p.m.*

*There is very little activity in the area.*

*Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 11: 30 a.m.*

*There is not much activity, just a person passing through occasionally.*

The only time visitors appear to dominate is when a tour group arrives. This observation is significant since it suggests that the activity during the day in this location is for a large part unrelated to leisure despite the link with one of Liverpool's main tourist attractions – The Beatles. If The Beatles are the city's strongest tourism product, and if tourism levels in Liverpool are increasing, then it would be expected that

tourist activity would be much more intensified in this area. The night time economy, on the other hand, produces more activity:

*Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:15 a.m.*

*A council worker asks me what I'm doing. I tell him I'm doing research. He tells me I should come back in the evening, "It's packed here in the night", he says.*

However, as established earlier, only a small proportion of this activity is directly related to 'The Beatles experience'. We can further conclude then that for local people, with some exceptions, attractions associated with The Beatles are not particularly appealing.

### **7.2.3 Summary**

It seems that on the whole visitors' performances are quite distinct from those of locals in this area. Furthermore, although the site is based on The Beatles, the majority of performances do not draw on this. It tends to be visitors and older residents who engage more with this aspect of the location. Locals' consumption of the touristic elements of the site appears to be largely incidental. While the physicality of the site and the narratives which are attached to it influence performance to an extent, the agency of place consumers in constructing their own experience is also evident.

## **7.3 The Cultural Quarter**

### **7.3.1 The Profile of the Cultural Quarter**

Visitors to the Cultural Quarter will come across examples of Liverpool's finest Greco-Roman architecture, which house some of the city's greatest cultural establishments. Next to them are St. John's Gardens, and across the road is the entrance to Lime Street Station. However, this impressive cultural backdrop, on the doorstep of one of the main gateways to the city does not seem to receive the attention it deserves.

This was the area of the city centre where there appeared to be the largest number of children. Mostly children visited this location as part of a group trip. However, in comparison to some of the other locations, this space seemed popular with older people too. There also appeared to be quite a significant number of people of Asian origin in this location, again often visiting in groups. Clearly, this is an area popular with both residents and visitors.



7.3: St. John's Gardens



7.4: William Brown Street

### 7.3.2 The Consumption of the Cultural Quarter

World Museum Liverpool and the Walker Art Gallery, which feature in the region's top ten free visitor attractions (The Mersey Partnership, 2008b) obviously attract visitors to this area of the city. Central Library also receives 600,000 visits a year (Trinity Mirror Merseyside, 2005: 85). In fact the visitor numbers for National Museums Liverpool, the group of 8 venues to which World Museum Liverpool and the Walker Art Gallery

belong, have seen a considerable increase since the introduction of free admission, and World Museum Liverpool has seen a particular increase in visitors since its recent refurbishment (The Daily Post, March 24<sup>th</sup> 2006). Observation indicated that this area of the city is clearly on the tourist trail,

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 12:30 p.m.*

*The City Sightseeing Tour Bus stops outside the museum. A commentary can be heard. The site is clearly designated as a space for tourism and is consumed by intentional visitors.*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 2:15 p.m.*

*Two coaches are parked up on William Brown Street; one from Aintree, one from Caernarfon, Wales.*

However, this area appears to be one of the least busy,

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 12:30 p.m.*

*There are a few people coming in and out of the library, the museum and the gallery, but the area is not very busy at all.*

*Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005, 4:30 p.m.*

*There are people sat in St. John's Gardens, but around the museum, library and Walker Gallery there is hardly any activity.*

*Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:15 a.m.*

*Only about twenty people have passed through in the last half hour. It's very quiet.*

The majority of place consumers here seem to be intentional; they either come as part of a tour group or clearly seek out the attraction they wish to visit. The extracts below indicate the element of intent in the consumption of this space,

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 12:30 p.m.*

*There are not many people walking up and down the street. It seems the area is mostly used by people visiting one of the attractions here.*

*Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 6:45 p.m.*

*A young man holding a guidebook stops me in St. John's Gardens. He points to St. George's Hall and asks what it is and if it is the law courts (St. George's Hall was once a court of law). From his accent he seems foreign. He thanks me and walks off, goes and sits on a bench and studies the guidebook some more. His performance appears to be informed by the guidebook text.*

*Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 11:45 a.m.*

*William Brown Street is the busiest I've seen it so far. At St. George's Hall, there is a group of about fifteen people. There are two coach parties of*



*primary school children and a minibus of children. A group of teenagers come out of the Walker Art Gallery.*

*A group of about thirty teenagers come out of World Museum Liverpool, and get on a coach.*

*A crowd of about fifty to sixty people is gathered in St. John's Gardens. A memorial speech for the victims of the London bombings is about to start. This is evidence of the variety of rituals and events which are enacted in the urban tourist landscape.*

Most people do not tend to hang around, once they finish their visit. However, on fine days, the Museum steps make a popular spot for people to sit, thus they are inclined to stay longer,

*Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005, 2:10 p.m.*

*A school party comes out of the museum and gets straight on the coach waiting for them.*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 2:30 p.m.*

*A group of teenage girls and two ladies accompanying them come out of the museum, sit on the museum steps and eat their lunch and ice cream from the ice cream van. There are quite a few people on the steps either just finished their visit or about to go in it seems.*

Most performances seem to revolve around the consumption of this space in terms of its functional use. However, some visitors, mainly foreign tourists, it seems, do also take the time to appreciate its aesthetic value,

*Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005, 4:45 p.m.*

*A young Asian male takes photos of the statues outside the Walker Gallery and the Steble fountain. This is a contrast to the other people in the area who are just coming in and out of the buildings, not paying much attention to their surroundings.*

St. George's Hall, the most imposing of all, often captures the gaze of visitors; however, since it is rarely open to the public, most just walk round the base and therefore their engagement appears rather limited and superficial.<sup>1</sup>

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 2:45 p.m.*

*A group of middle-aged people are stood outside St. George's Hall on the plateau. They look around but don't go up towards the entrance.*

*Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 11:30 a.m.*

*St. George's Hall is open and there are two doormen outside. One of the doormen tells me it's open for a tour. A lady comes out and the doorman tells an American man and woman waiting outside that she's their guide.*

*The man and woman decide not to do the tour as at the moment there is no access to the main hall. They ask when St. George's Hall will be open again to the public so they can come back.*

Apart from tourists, groups of children on educational visits, families and senior citizens appear to be the main consumers of this space. Since most of the activity actually takes place inside the buildings, it is difficult to make distinctions between different kinds of performance. Group performances, however, do give some indication of the identity of certain performers. As suggested above though, locals' and visitors' performances differ perhaps only in visitors' recognition of the architectural landscape as an attraction in its own right.

*Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2005, 8:30 p.m.*

*Three young female visitors walk round the area taking photos of St. George's Hall, the museum and gallery, etc. The museum and the gallery are closed. Therefore this indicates that the architectural backdrop of this space is consumed as an attraction in itself.*

In St. John's Gardens the distinction between visitors and locals seems even less apparent. However, since many visitors come on tour buses and get whisked off after their visit, this is probably more of a local hotspot. Nonetheless, the profile of people is more diverse and the range of performances is broader, especially on a good day,

*Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 4:30 p.m.*

*In St. John's Gardens there are people sunbathing, sitting on benches alone or chatting, and teenagers playing football.*

*Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 12:00 p.m.*

*Gradually more people come into St. John's Gardens. They are sat on benches, on the grass, eating lunch, sunbathing, reading, etc. One middle-aged man and woman have got a blanket and are sunbathing in swimwear! This challenges the conventions of leisure practice and the space within which it takes place.*

*Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2005, 10:30 a.m.*

*In St. John's Gardens, a young male in a business suit is sat talking on the phone. Three middle-aged women are sat talking.*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 2:00 p.m.*

*In St. John's Gardens a young man and woman are sat on a bench. Four young foreign people, two male and two female, pose at the central monument and take each other's photos.*

*A group of teenage girls hang round by the central monument. One of them has a baby in a pram. They are listening to music on a cassette player and chatting.*

*A group of about ten young Japanese people are sat on the grass.*

*A few people are just passing through the gardens.*

*7:00 p.m.*

*St. John's Gardens is deserted apart from a beggar and three teenage boys sat on the grass. One of them is playing the guitar.*

Here, no script is needed to perform, and there appears to be less social regulation, whereas the scripts to perform in the museum space, for example, are held to a greater extent by those with the appropriate social and cultural capital and there appears to be more restriction on accepted forms of activity,

*Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:30 a.m.*

*There is a sign on the steps of St. George's Hall: "Skateboarding prohibited under section 235 of the local government act 1972....."*

When the museum, gallery and library close, most people see no reason to stay, while in St. John's Gardens time matters less, until the sun starts to set.

### **7.3.3 Summary**

It is interesting to note then that the Cultural Quarter which groups together the establishments most representative of institutionalised cultural activity was the least busy of all. This is especially significant considering consumption of this space is not dependent on economic capital. It seems that with the exception of the gardens, the area only provides a specific category of leisure facilities; therefore it is quite logical that this space is consumed mainly by intentional users who are attracted by this kind of cultural activity. However, it seems that more could be done to attract a greater and more diverse number of visitors to this area.

## **7.4 The Retail Quarter**

### **7.4.1 The Profile of the Retail Quarter**

This is the hub of the city centre and the focus of the city's retail activity. However, it also houses the city's main Tourist Information Centre, a selection of restaurants and bars, a hotel and the Playhouse Theatre.

In this location the age of place consumers was the most diverse, suggesting that shopping is an activity common to most age groups. While visitors to the city came into

this part of the city centre, they tended to blend in more with other consumers of the space.



7.5: Williamson Square and the 'Fountain'



7.6: Taking a break in Williamson Square

#### **7.4.2 The Consumption of the Retail Quarter**

It is clearly the provision of shops which draws people into this area; when the shops are closed the number of people consuming this space is dramatically reduced,

*Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 6:30 p.m.*

*Apart from shoppers coming in and out of Tesco and the odd passer-by, the area is quite quiet.*

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 6:15 p.m.*

*The area is a lot less busy than in shopping hours.*

The fact that, during shopping hours, this is the busiest area in the city supports evidence that shopping is the principal motivation for visitors coming to cities (Middleton, 2000:213). However, it is not just rows of retail outlets which create the identity of this place. It can be seen as a kind of 'heterogenic' space (Edensor, 2001), with all kinds of performances being enacted. There is a general buzz about the place from the characteristic monologues of street vendors and stall holders who shout out their wares, "Get your lighters, three for a pound", of the man at the newspaper stand, "Eeecho!", or of the pleas of the homeless, "Would you like to buy *The Big Issue*?". Then there are the buskers who fill the streets with music, or the beggars, some attracting attention as they beg for a few pence and others trying to pass unnoticed as they rummage through the bins. So, in this way, in contrast to the numerous opportunities for consumption, the area also provides a forum for everyday people just trying to make a living, or in some cases struggling to survive.

However, further observation indicated that apart from these deliberate performances, other performances are enacted in a less conscious manner. Furthermore, members of the on looking audience also become the actors in this representation of everyday life. As the elderly sit and rest in Williamson Square, other people's everyday lives make an intriguing performance to watch,

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 1:00 p.m.*

*An elderly man is sat just watching the activity around him. A young couple captures his attention.*

*Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005, 4:00 p.m.*

*A few people are just sitting in the Square. They seem to be resting or waiting for others. They often watch passers-by.*

Strangers sit and recount their joys or their troubles to anyone who is willing to listen,

*Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2005, 12:45 p.m.*

*An elderly lady sits down next to me with her shopping. After a few minutes, she turns and tells me how she was in M&S and she thought she'd lost her credit card but it turned out somebody had handed it in at the Post Office where she'd been. She then continues, "We're not all bad people in Liverpool; most of us are actually honest. We've had a lot of bad press lately, but..."*

Parents and grandparents also watch as their children delight in a ride on the merry-go-round which can sometimes be found there. Other performances observed, however, are less conventional,

*Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 3:45 p.m.*

*The fountain is clearly an attraction. Some people just walk past. Some stop and look but hardly anyone reads the poem around it. Many people, young and old, take up the challenge to run through the fountain. A group of school girls run through and scream. Passers-by stop and look and smile. A middle aged visitor sees this and decides to run through too.*

*Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 7:15 p.m.*

*An event is taking place on Parker Street – a live broadcast on the BBC screen of a Royal Ballet performance from the Royal Opera House. Temporary seating has been set up outside in front of the screen. Mass media technology transforms the conventional dimensions of the theatrical performance.*

*The presenter at the Royal Opera House announces the venues where the performance will be broadcast. When Liverpool is announced, the audience in Liverpool cheer. This is evidence of people engaging with events which are separated in space from the sites where they take place.*

*7:30 p.m.*

*Apart from those actually sitting watching the performance, there are passers-by who also engage with the event in various ways. Some passers-by (young-middle aged males) stand at the side of the screen mimicking ballet dancers. The fact that they react in a humorous way is perhaps indicative that this is not something they are familiar with or have particular respect for.*

*A beggar then wanders over, finds a comfortable resting place among the audience and falls asleep. Security officers come and tell him he can't sleep there and he should go and sleep on the nearby bench if he wants to sleep. He doesn't move but doesn't cause any trouble and after a while moves on.*

*A young man then comes along, looks up at the screen and then starts dancing with his dog. So, apart from the main performance, the event*

*induces other performative acts, whereby the serious nature of the performance and the attention devoted to it is challenged.*

The area also provides an arena for group performances where particular social and cultural identities are enacted. The city's strong affiliation with football, which is demonstrated in various ways, is one example of this,

*Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 1:00 p.m.*

*Four young men wearing Liverpool football kits, and Turkish hats walk through the square attracting everyone's attention. The hats are a reference to the UEFA cup final between Liverpool and Milan which is taking place in Istanbul later this evening. A young lady stops outside LFC Official Club Store and takes a photo even though the store is closed and the shutters are down.*

Other organised events also transform the space through the performance of people of various cultural and ethnic identities,

*Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2005, 12:15 p.m.*

*In Williamson Square people have gathered round a stage where jugglers and acrobats are performing to music. They capture the attention of some shoppers but others just cast a glance and carry on walking. The event is part of the Brouhaha festival. I stay a while and watch.*

*1:00 p.m.*

*In Queen Square another stage has been set up, the crowd here is larger than in Williamson Square. A group of young street dancers from Amsterdam are performing. Some young girls in the audience sing along and dance.*

*1:30 p.m.*

*The next performance is a group from Sri Lanka. The performance is interesting in that through dance it also tells a story, so the culture is transmitted through the performance.*

*2:15 p.m.*

*Back in Queen Square there is a group of Spanish dancers performing. While the displays of different cultures certainly gains the public's appreciation, apart from the street dance performance the crowd only engage by applauding. They don't seem to engage on a deeper level.*

*It also occurs to me that in my travels through the city the presence of diverse ethnic groups is not very prominent given the city's accolade of 'The World In One City'.*

Visitors' performances, on the other hand, are often the least distinct. The main Tourist Information Centre is in this area; therefore the presence of visitors to the city would be expected here, but, for the most part visitors appear to mingle in with the rest of the shoppers. However, the main way their performance can be distinguished from locals is once again in the attention they pay to elements of the environment that the locals appear oblivious to,

*Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 4:15 p.m.*

*A middle-aged man looks round the square as if he is familiarising himself with his surroundings then wanders over to the fountain and takes a photo. He walks towards the Playhouse Theatre and takes a photo of that too. It's quite a different response to everyone else who is just rushing past.*

*Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2005, 12:45 p.m.*

*Three young men stand in front of Liverpool Football Club Official Store and take each other's photos.*

### **7.4.3 Summary**

On the whole the identity of this space is very fluid. While activity during the day is more constant than in the previous two locations discussed, it is still organised around the patterns of the working day and working week, so that times when people are passing through to go to work or are at leisure are the busiest. However, the fact that activity dramatically reduces after shopping hours confirms that this is the core attraction of the area. Nonetheless, while activity is largely based on shopping, various performances are enacted which generally focus on the everyday culture of the social groups who use the space. The majority of performances appear to be natural reactions to everyday life rather than staged events. Furthermore, it is perhaps in this location that the 'consuming paradox' (Miles, 1998b) is most evident. While this account may paint a vibrant image of this area, clearly, there are those who are excluded because they lack the necessary economic or cultural capital to consume.

## **7.5 Hope Street Quarter**

### **7.5.1 The Profile of Hope Street Quarter**

Residential, office and leisure spaces exist in the impressive Georgian terraces that run along Hope Street and Rodney Street, framed by the city's two cathedrals, the Metropolitan (Catholic) Cathedral at one end and (the Anglican) Liverpool Cathedral at the other. Both the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University also



occupy this space, as does Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts. As such, this area of the city is a hive of arts, cultural and academic life.

A large number of people using this area seemed to be under 40. However, there were very few children here. There appeared to be more users of different ethnic origin than in other areas of the city centre. Furthermore, a larger proportion of people appeared to be smartly dressed here. While there were place consumers going about their everyday business, others were clearly visitors to the city.



7.7: Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King



7.8: Liverpool Cathedral

### 7.5.2 The Consumption of Hope Street Quarter

In general, there seem to be two kinds of tourist performance enacted here. Firstly, the almost regimental group performances which are clearly mapped out according to the 'must-sees' of the industry,

*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 1:45 p.m.*

*The Yellow Duckmarine comes along Hope Street. The passengers are listening to the commentary and looking round. The City Sightseeing Liverpool tour bus then goes past, although there don't seem to be many passengers on it.*

*Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 5:45 p.m.*

*A coach stops outside Liverpool Cathedral. A party of Japanese middle-aged visitors get out and seem very excited. They all get cameras out and take photos of the cathedral and each other. Some take photos down Rodney Street. Then they all go into the cathedral.*

*6:00 p.m.*

*The Japanese visitors start coming out of the cathedral and get back on the coach.*

*Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 2:30 p.m.*

*A tour group of about ten people in their twenties are led by a guide up to the Metropolitan Cathedral.*

*Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 10:30 a.m.*

*A German coach party of various age groups has stopped by the 'A Case History' sculpture on Hope Street. They pose for photos, then after a few minutes get back on the coach.*

Then there are the more fluid, independent performances, which still may be influenced by the scripts of the guide book, but are generally more spontaneous,

*Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 3:00 p.m.*

*A middle-aged Asian female with a guide book, comes out of Liverpool Cathedral, and walks across to Rodney Street.*

*Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 6:15 p.m.*

*A cab drives up to Liverpool Cathedral. Two middle-aged ladies jump out, take a photo of the Cathedral and jump straight back in.*

The cathedrals seem to be the main attraction for visitors. Therefore there is a steady stream of visitors, from morning to early evening at both cathedrals, some paying a visit to both,

*Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 2:15 p.m.*

*Two middle-aged men and one lady, who were at Liverpool Cathedral earlier walk up and go into the Metropolitan Cathedral.*

Visitors to the cathedrals seem to be for the most part intentional, however, they do not all consume the space in the same way. Some just stop for a snapshot, while for others the café is more of an attraction,

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 12:00 p.m.*

*It seems to be mostly intentional users who visit the cathedrals but some don't actually enter and just take photos or just go to the cafés.*

It is not only visitors who are attracted by the features of this area. In much the same way, the cathedrals act as attractions for school children on educational visits and local people keen to explore them from the inside. Once again, locals consuming the cathedrals as a leisure attraction tend not to engage in the ritualistic performances of most of the tourists, for example, taking photographs. For locals it appears to be less of a heightened experience,

*Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 3:00 p.m.*

*A primary school party come out of Liverpool Cathedral with their teacher and get on a coach. They're chatting and they seem excited.*

*Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 7:00 p.m.*

*A young man and woman, who were at Liverpool Cathedral earlier, walk up the steps of the Metropolitan Cathedral. The man, who appears to be local from his accent, seems to be showing her round.*

However, other groups perform different rituals associated with various spheres of life. The cathedrals are obviously spiritual centres, so people congregate to attend services or for private prayer,

*Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 9:45 a.m.*

*At Liverpool Cathedral, a middle-aged man and woman take photos of the cathedral. The woman turns and asks me, "There is a service on isn't there?" I reply that I'm not sure.*

At Liverpool Cathedral, during the graduation ceremonies, a different ritual is performed as hoards of graduates dressed in their gowns and mortarboards, accompanied by proud family members and friends, celebrate their academic achievement,

*Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2005, 4:45 p.m.*

*There are hoards of people, smartly dressed, coming out of Liverpool Cathedral where graduation ceremonies have been taking place. This is the busiest the area has been until now. People head off in all directions.*

Thus, the grandiose structures of both cathedrals are sources of various social performances; on the one hand places of worship or celebration and on the other major visitor attractions, they are representative of the de-differentiation of social and cultural life.

However, other place consumers make no reference to the cathedrals as they go about their business, passing them by; they are just another feature of everyday life,

*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 1:45 p.m.*

*Passers-by don't seem to pay much attention to the Metropolitan Cathedral as they walk past.*

*2:00 p.m.*

*People are strolling down the hill past the Anglican Cathedral, but they don't pay any attention to it.*

The majority of activity in the area appears to be based on the daily academic life of students. Therefore the profile of the area changes and activity almost comes to a standstill at the end of the academic year,

*Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 3:45 p.m.*

*The main activity revolves around students coming and going.*

*Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 9:15 a.m.*

*Along Hope Street there is very little activity, just people going about their daily business. The absence of students is notable since the academic year has finished.*

However, the various leisure facilities create a hub of social activity. In the summer months, they still appear to have a lot of trade,

*Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 6:45 p.m.*

*Noise can be heard from the Philharmonic pub and Blakes bar- there is a slow stream of people coming in and out. Groups of people, quite well-dressed, are standing chatting outside the Everyman theatre.*

This suggests that the majority of students do not socialise there, or at least do not regularly frequent the more expensive restaurants, to which most student budgets would not stretch. These establishments seem to attract more businesspeople or people working within the creative industry.

*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 1:45 p.m.*

*Two middle-aged men and a middle-aged lady dressed in business suits, come out of The Other Place Bistro.*

*Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 9:15 a.m.*

*As I pass London Carriage Works there are about ten to fifteen people inside, mainly middle-aged men in suits.*

When the weather is good the activity spills out into the courtyards or onto the pavement outside the restaurants. However, apart from the spaces outside the two cathedrals, the area provides no resting place for those who don't want to eat or drink but just want to sit,

*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 1:45 p.m.*

*People are sat at tables outside the Metropolitan Cathedral Visitor Centre.*

*Along Hope Street, despite the good weather, most people are sat inside. There is no seating outside most restaurants. There is no street furniture either for people to just sit and rest.*

*Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 4:15 p.m.*

*A young lady is sat on a stone pedestal outside the Metropolitan Cathedral reading a paper. This is one of the few public spaces to sit.*

Plans for the regeneration of the area, however, aim to take its public realm into account (Liverpool Vision, 2005).

### **7.5.3 Summary**

Place consumers' experiences of Hope Street Quarter, then, appear to be based on various forms of social and cultural activity. Interestingly, the site appears to attract more ethnically diverse visitors than the other sites observed. However, the consumption of the space for leisure purposes, apart from the Cathedrals, generally requires economic capital. Diverse performances are enacted, relating to various rituals of everyday life. However, performances appear to be directly related to the physical features of this location and as such place consumers seem to need a specific reason to perform here.

## **7.6 The Waterfront**

### **7.6.1 The Profile of the Waterfront**

The location referred to as The Waterfront lines the River Mersey and comprises two main areas, which are linked by the promenade which runs along them. The first is the

area generally referred to as the Pier Head and the other the Albert Dock. The Albert Dock is predominantly a leisure complex which houses museums and galleries, cafés, bars, restaurants, hotels, shops and a gym. However, there are also some flats and offices there creating a mix of leisure, residential and commercial activity. The Pier Head is home to iconic buildings such as the Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool building, collectively known as the 'Three Graces', and built during the height of Liverpool's maritime industry. It is also the location where river cruises begin and end. The Pier Head differs from the Albert Dock in the sense that there is more open space and there are fewer commercial outlets within the space.

In terms of the age of place consumers here, it was found that at the Albert Dock there were less people below the age of 25 or over the age of 65. It was also clear from the profile of respondents that the location was popular for a family day out. However, families on the whole tended to be more selective in which aspects of the complex they visited. For example, families did not appear to frequent the cafés and restaurants to the same extent as other place consumers. At the Pier Head, the age range appeared to be broader than at the Albert Dock with more teenagers and senior citizens present. Another observation concerning the participants as a whole in this location was that there was not much ethnic diversity among them.



7.9: Tate Gallery at Albert Dock



7.10: Riverside Walk



7.11: The Pier Head and the Three Graces

### 7.6.2 The Consumption of the Waterfront

A variety of performances are enacted by visitors to the Waterfront, which appear to be influenced by a number of factors. The actual physical elements of the location clearly play a role in attracting visitors in the first place and enabling them to engage in a particular activity. There are five museums and galleries in this area of the city, which evidently account for a considerable proportion of the activity (The Mersey Partnership, 2008b: 10) and provide scripts for visitors to draw on. Tours on the Mersey Ferries or on the Yellow Duckmarine (a vehicle which tours the city and actually enters the water in the docks), also allow visitors to explore the city through a different dimension and engage with Liverpool's maritime culture. Gazing is clearly one way in which visitors consume this space. The river and the Royal Liver Building in particular become objects of the gaze as people stop to look at them,

*Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 4:00 p.m.*

*Two people (male and female) stroll along, stop opposite the Royal Liver Building, point and comment.*

It is the attention visitors give to these unfamiliar surroundings that distinguishes them from locals. That said, the river appears to be a focal point for local people just as much as for visitors. However, "the tourist gaze" (Urry, 1990) is certainly not unidirectional, as some visitors appear to be less interested in the iconic attractions of the area,

*Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 4:00 p.m.*

*Two people (male and female) walk past with backpacks and pulling suitcases. They are not paying attention to their surroundings.*

Interestingly, although the Albert Dock is reportedly the most popular visitor attraction for visitors to Liverpool (The Mersey Partnership, 2004a: 21) the number of empty units suggests that potential investors do not consider it to be a particularly enterprising site. Promotional messages around the complex which in fact call for new investors, “Albert Dock is changing, retailers: be part of the change – join Ocean, The Room Store, Tate Liverpool, babycream & others”, suggest that the Albert Dock is trying to reposition itself in order to attract further investment. In the evenings, activity predominantly revolves around place consumers visiting the various bars and restaurants on site. However, during the day, although the majority of people appear to have come to the dock with some intention, they aren’t necessarily there to consume, and certainly not to shop, but just to wander as the following observations suggest,

*Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 10:00 a.m.*

*There is more activity round the dock as shops open, but no custom inside.*

*Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 3:45 p.m.*

*The Albert Dock provides a much more scripted experience than the Pier Head. The museums and galleries and references to The Beatles and Liverpool’s heritage in general (the football teams, maritime past, etc) in the various outlets represent texts which can clearly influence the experience of the visitor. There seems to be more intentional use of the Albert Dock as tourist space than of the Pier Head. However, the majority of people appear to be just walking round.*

This is corroborated by Mellor (1991:107) who observes, “Most visitors to the Dock amble around relatively aimlessly”. In addition, while there is seating along the Riverfront itself, there is a noticeable lack of seating around the dock itself; potentially an intentional strategy to keep the constant trail of visitors moving around the rather narrow walkway or perhaps to entice visitors to take a break in one of the cafés or restaurants.

The River Mersey, in contrast to the other purpose-built features, provides the opportunity for less scripted performances, many of which are not specific to the role of the visitor. Many visitors focus on the river itself as a stage on which they can perform or watch others performing. Apart from the ferry, there are a number of ways in which people engage with the river. One of these, for local people especially, is the Mersey River Festival, which year after year brings swarms of visitors to the Waterfront.



Masses gather along the riverfront to watch the various vessels sail by or queue for the chance to climb aboard one moored in the docks. While the festival itself is a performance, it provides the opportunity for less conscious performances by the public,

*Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 1:00 p.m.*

*Today is the Mersey River Festival. The Pier Head and Albert Dock are extremely crowded compared to any other time.*

*1:15 p.m.*

*At the Albert Dock people are lined up along the river standing and watching. The boats come out of the dock on to the river. The boats become the object of the audience's gaze.*

*2:00 p.m.*

*'Sailing' by Rod Stewart is played over the loudspeaker. A woman in the crowd starts singing, engaging with the event and enacting her own performance.*

However, while many place consumers clearly derive pleasure from their interaction with the riverside, there is little activity on the river itself and there appears to be little opportunity, apart from the ferries, for people to engage with the water in this way. Nonetheless, not everyone seems to need a special reason to go down to the Waterfront. Along the promenade, you see people just sitting and looking out across the water, sitting and chatting, commenting on the odd boat that passes by or even watching each other. For them it seems to be more about just being than doing anything in particular. For others to stroll, jog, cycle, or sit and read, appears to be enhanced by the presence of the river. There are times when all that disturbs the silence is the hum of an engine or the familiar *Ferry 'Cross The Mersey* playing out as the Mersey Ferry sets off. Therefore, it is perhaps this distinction from the core of the city centre that brings some visitors to the Waterfront.

While the Waterfront has clearly been developed to attract tourists, and tourist activity is evident, the observations suggested that the performances are often based on locals' engagement with everyday life and the enactment of personal and collective identities and narratives. It is here where the socially constructed nature of the location is most evident, as the following observations demonstrate:

*Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 4:00 p.m.*

*At the Pier Head, the main activity revolves around a group of 'Goths' aged approximately 14-17. They are mostly dressed in black and denim hanging out in little groups. There are so many of them, possibly 150, that they totally dominate the area. They are mostly concentrated on 2 grass areas*

*where they have strewn toilet paper, but some are also on benches, others on skateboards or reading. In one group a boy has a guitar and is playing. The Police come along and tell them to move off the grass patch where they are and to pick up the paper. Most of them move but some stay and some just go and sit on another patch of grass.*

*7:00 p.m.*

*A group of four teenage boys are sat down on a bench behind me. They strike up conversation and ask me what I'm doing. They're drunk and have alcohol in a plastic bag. They tell me they've missed the last ferry to Birkenhead. One boy in particular is very drunk; he swears and throws his bottle which smashes. One of his friends, who is older, tells him to behave and apologise. Another boy goes over to two 'Goth' girls (a considerable number are still here from earlier), as they refer to them and starts chatting to them. The older boy makes fun of the 'Goths'.*

It is interesting to watch these informal cultural performances and the distinctions and tensions between different social structures. For example, the Goths' common dress code indicates their collective identity 'role' while distinguishing them from the rest of the visitors, and from the group of four boys, even though they are of a similar age and engaged in similar activities. As the evening goes on they are still there, too young to go to the pub, some of them consume alcohol from bottles in carrier bags. Their activity is 'controlled' by the authority figures of the police and the older boy in the group of four who are indicative of different levels of social order. However, the youths' consumption of this space is not so much implicated in the activity they carry out, particularly in the case of the Goths, but in their collective presence. This is very different to the activity at the Albert Dock, where generally small groups, dressed quite smartly are heading for the bars and restaurants, and undesirable behaviour is discouraged by tight security and surveillance. The 'Goths' presence creates a 'heterotopic' space where the dimensions of resistance and control, accepted and unaccepted social practice are played out.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that while place consumers' performances are played out in space, they are also structured through time (Urry, 1995:63-64). Activity in this location in particular appears to be structured around the socially constructed nature of the day, the week and the year. Peak activity seems to coincide with times when people are usually 'at leisure', for example, on lunch breaks, in the evening or at the weekend. This is significant because it suggests that activity here, tourist or otherwise, is predominantly leisure based and shaped around the conventions of the working day, week and year.

### **7.6.3 Summary**

Thus, it appears that at the Waterfront, there are a variety of performances being enacted. While some of these engage with the formal scripts of the tourist industry, many are of a mundane nature and as such performances of visitors and locals cannot always be distinguished. Performance is not necessarily constrained by scripts directly associated with the space and so the Waterfront is a stage on which place consumers can invent and reinvent their own cultural narratives. However, social control, whether intentional or incidental, means that The Albert Dock in particular can be seen as a form of 'enclavic space' (Edensor, 2000; 2001), almost detached from the rest of the city, and as such constrains certain performances while enabling others. The Pier Head, on the other hand, represents a more heterogenic space, but is still characterised by various forms of social power.

## **7.7 Discussion**

The series of observations carried out reveal how Liverpool's urban tourist landscape is a socio-cultural construction. As Jutla (2000) argues, space is encountered in two ways: as object and as experience. In relation to Liverpool, for example, the river or the cathedrals are objects which are gazed upon. Clearly the physical features of the landscape play a major part in this encounter. However, equally, if not more important is the notion of space as experience, which can be understood as the physical and social interaction with space.

Many of the observations referred to above reveal how social encounters constitute part of the experience of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. For example, the group of Goths gathered at the Pier Head. It is also evident that how place consumers come into physical contact with the landscape shapes this experience. The ways in which the landscape is practised features in the findings above. One such example is the different means of transport with which visitors can tour the city, such as The Yellow Duckmarine, The Mersey Ferries and the more traditional tour buses. In this way visitors can experience different dimensions of the landscape, land or water, or in the case of the Yellow Duckmarine, both. This is interesting because while the way people travel to tourist destinations has been the subject of much research, how they travel within them has for the most part been overlooked. Edensor's work on "tourist walking performances" (2000: 338-341), indicates how pedestrians' movements take on a different pace and rhythm according to the spaces through which they move and the

people by whom they are accompanied. However, this theory does not highlight the different means of transport used. Moreover, in Liverpool, the various means of transport do not just provide a way of getting from one place to another, but constitute an experience in themselves. The commentaries on these tours and the rendition of 'Ferry 'Cross the Mersey' on the Ferries provide passengers with a means of interpreting and engaging with the landscape and its history. It is this interaction between people and the physical landscape which creates meaning and an embodied experience.

In line with Edensor's findings (2000; 2001), different kinds of performance could be observed in Liverpool. Some were quite regimental, especially those which involved groups visiting the typical 'must-see' attractions. Others were more fluid but still appeared to draw on some of the scripts of the industry, such as guide books. Other place consumers, however, seemed to be 'doing their own thing' and drawing their own trail where, for example, the Liverpool FC store became the star attraction. Furthermore, the nature of performances often appeared to be related to the regulation of space within a specific location. For example, in some spaces such as the Albert Dock social order and the physical layout of the landscape seemed to be highly regulated, producing an enclavic space. In Williamson Square, in the Retail Quarter, however, the physical features and activity appeared less uniform resulting in a more heterogenic space. While some tourism theory has emphasised the distinction between enclavic and heterogenic space (Edensor, 2000; 2001) this contrast did not appear to be so distinct in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. This is not to say that this landscape is a homogenous, strictly ordered entity as perhaps represented by Liverpool's tourism bodies (The Mersey Partnership, 2003; 2005b; 2006b). The profiles of the various locations observed in this research indicate how they are physically and socially diverse. Furthermore, within particular locations, various social orders are at work, thus constituting "heterotopic" space (Foucault, 1986; Hetherington, 1997). The urban tourist landscape, therefore, is characterised by a series of micro-cultures which are defined in contrast to each other.

Moreover, it should be emphasised that within these performances and spaces, the interplay of structure and agency is evident. On the one hand, performances are bound by the structure of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, in other words the social conventions and physical features associated with the practice of visiting Liverpool. On the other hand, some participants become agents in constructing their own experience,

independently from prescribed practice. However, without knowing what place consumers are thinking, and only knowing what they are doing it is only possible to draw some limited conclusions. While it may seem that they are following the prescribed tourist trail, it could be that they are just going through the motions and contesting it in their own way.

Observation suggested that in addition to the functional use of the landscape, it also represented a forum where people could enact different social and cultural identities, which again reinforces the centrality of the social to the experience of the urban tourist landscape. The findings provided evidence of both formal and informal performances and therefore different kinds of audience. At organised street events place consumers constituted members of simple, but also mass audiences in the case of televised events. However, place consumers also became performers in their enactments of everyday life. From street vendors to people just sitting or going about their business, place consumers themselves also became the focus of attention. For example, for senior citizens especially, Williamson Square seemed to represent a stage where they could watch the hustle and bustle of activity but also engage their own audience by relating their own stories. In this sense, it can be argued that there is a decreasing distinction between audience and performer and therefore the "diffused audience" is omnipresent (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998; Longhurst, 2007).

Nonetheless, it was evident that there were certain groups which were less involved or excluded from these performances. In particular, there was a limited presence of young teenagers. Those who were present often appeared to be at a loose end and not engaged with the landscape in a positive way. Furthermore, there appeared to be limited representation of ethnic minorities among place consumers of the urban tourist landscape. This might suggest that there are limited opportunities or restrictive factors which prevent these groups from engagement. While events associated with Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme appear to be achieving high levels of engagement amongst these groups (Impacts 08, 2009:4), this level of participation does not seem to apply within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape as a whole. At a time when Liverpool is promoting itself as 'The World In One City', it might be expected that the extent of the ethnic diversity in the city centre would be greater.

As in most tourist destinations there was some distinction between spaces which are consumed more by visitors and those which are consumed more by residents.

However, on the whole tourist activity appeared to mingle into everyday life in the city, although the extent to which it did varied according to location. Therefore the performance of everyday life is a crucial element of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. Nonetheless, the continuities of everyday life and performance within the context of urban tourist destinations have not before been made explicit.

Finally, while various bodies in the city share the common vision of developing Liverpool's urban tourist landscape and increasing numbers of visitors to the city (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 3; Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 18; The Mersey Partnership, 2003: 8), the limited number of visitors and activity in certain areas is quite surprising. For example, observation of the Cultural Quarter indicates that of the large number of visits to Liverpool (The Mersey Partnership, 2003) a limited number involve visiting museums and galleries or solely this kind of activity, which the figures from surveys appears to confirm (The Mersey Partnership, 2004b). Furthermore, it appears that certain locations such as the Retail Quarter or the Cultural Quarter which are predominantly based on a single kind of activity, shopping or visiting exhibitions, have limited activity due to the opening hours of the establishments within them but also because in a sense they have a single function. The inclusion of a variety of facilities and activities and extended opening hours could potentially add to the vibrancy of these areas. Initiatives such as the Business Improvement District (marketing@liverpool, 2005) are working towards this end by encouraging late night shopping and street entertainment. Also, clearly from the comments of service providers in the previous chapter, plans to keep the museum and gallery in the Cultural Quarter open later could materialise but as yet these spaces do not appear to be achieving their full potential.<sup>2</sup>

## **7.8 Conclusion**

Through analysing the findings from the observation of the five locations in relation to each other, a number of themes emerge:

- Consumption of space as experience
  - Social experience of the landscape
  - Physical/embodied experience of the landscape
- Representations of Liverpool Culture
  - Performance and the ordering of space
  - Performing social and cultural identities

- Social inclusion and cultural engagement
- Tourist performance and everyday life
- Development of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape

The boundaries of the tourist landscape in Liverpool can be said to verge on if not merge with everyday social activity. The city's residents interact with visitors and engage in similar activities to them, especially in their leisure time. Therefore, residents can also be perceived as visitors, sharing similar cultural experiences. Clearly then, the de-differentiation of various forms of social activity and the times and spaces within which these take place result in, especially in urban tourist locations like Liverpool, an assimilation of tourist and local leisure activity. The only main difference appears to be in the subjective consciousness of the place consumer, which in the case of visitors tends to be demonstrated in their more ostentatious reactions to their surroundings. Nonetheless, there are certain features and attractions of particular areas which locals did not appear to engage with in the same way. As summer progresses there is more obvious and increased tourist activity, however, the relationship between activity levels and patterns of the working day or week suggests that much of the activity in the city centre is related to the everyday lives of local people. As such, it appears that in certain locations, a certain vibrancy is lacking. However, careful planning to introduce a wider variety of facilities and resources and create increased access to these could resolve this issue.

While tourism exists in Liverpool and appears to be growing, it is only recently that the city has been conceived as an urban tourist destination. The activities, sites and stories mapped out by the industry make up part of the urban tourism experience. Particularly interesting are the different kinds of tour, which, as well as the standard walking tour and open top bus tour, include the Yellow Duckmarine, the Mersey Ferries and the Magical Mystery Tour Bus. These inventive means of transport appear to add another dimension to the experience of the urban tourist landscape. However, it is clear that the everyday social life of the city also plays an influential role. Liverpool's urban tourist landscape is not just a space where culture is consumed through traditional cultural establishments such as its museums, galleries and theatres. More informal culture is consumed through the performance of everyday rituals and identities. These enactments, some of which tend to be more spontaneous and fluid and not so tightly fixed to the physicality of the landscape than the more prescribed cultural activities, add colour and interest to the urban tourist landscape. The performances of various socio-

cultural groups in the city then, can shape urban tourist space over and beyond its physical and scripted nature; as such the urban tourist experience is embedded in the everyday life of the city.

However, the social profile of the different sites indicated that various forms of social control are at play, enhancing some place consumers' ability to perform while reducing the opportunities for others. For example, the regulation of certain spaces and the relative absence of ethnic minority groups, teenagers and towards the evening, senior citizens, suggests that the urban tourist landscape is expressly designed to encourage certain kinds of consumers and certain forms of consumption. However, without actually addressing place consumers themselves, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent structure on the one hand and agency on the other influence experience of the urban tourist landscape. The next chapter will build on the findings from the participant observation data by presenting in greater detail who the place consumers of the five locations are and also what their reasons for visiting are.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Since the research was carried out, a Heritage Centre has now opened within St. George's Hall, therefore allowing internal viewing of the building.

<sup>2</sup> Liverpool One retail and leisure complex has opened since the observations upon which this chapter is based were made. This site includes a cinema, restaurants and bars and extended shopping hours which should generate more activity in the evening.



## **8. The Profile and Motivation of Place Consumers**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to give an idea of the context within which the consumption of culture takes place with regards to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. The participant observation data presented in the previous chapter gives an idea of who the place consumers are. However, building on this aim, the analysis of the profile of place consumers generated from interview data will give a more specific idea of who consumes this space. Also, analysis of place consumers' motivations will explain the basis for place consumers' activities thus elaborating on the information presented in the previous chapter and providing a context for those that follow.

### **8.2 The Profile of Respondents**

#### **8.2.1 Visitors or Residents**

In total 100 respondents, some of whom responded as a pair but counted as one, were interviewed in Liverpool city centre. Of these 69 were residents and 31 were visitors to the city. As explained previously, 'place consumers' is the term I have used to refer to this group of respondents in general, whereas 'residents' includes those living in the local area and 'visitors' denotes all those having travelled from outside the local area. Nonetheless, in a sense all the place consumers interviewed could be classed as 'visitors' since they all chose for one reason or another to visit a particular part of the urban tourist landscape.

The fact that some respondents considered themselves to be visitors while others claimed to be residents, despite residing in the same location, relates back to the methodological problem discussed earlier concerning how to define resident and visitor. This issue arose especially in relation to those living on the Wirral, with some considering themselves residents, while others thought of themselves as visitors. This leads to a broader issue, to which we will return in subsequent chapters, concerning the relationship between the Wirral and Liverpool and the boundary that the River Mersey represents. Interestingly, this indicates that the complexity of urban tourism does not simply lie in the fact that tourism is inseparable from other areas of activity, such as recreation, as Franklin (2003:1) and Hall and Page (2002:160) have suggested. The distinction between tourism and everyday life in the city is also a matter of identity and belonging as defined by place consumers themselves. Longhurst (2007)

has demonstrated that the performance of everyday life is central to the processes of identity construction in contemporary society. Therefore everyday identities and practices are just as important as those related specifically to tourism in considering the experience of the urban tourist landscape. This issue will be illustrated in subsequent chapters, by referring to respondents' own views.

Despite these issues, and although the samples were not large enough to be statistically representative, it is still interesting to consider the profile of the place consumers to be found in each location. I should emphasise here that this data has been included to indicate the composition of the sample, rather than to make generalised claims about the population as a whole. The graph below indicates the distribution of residents and visitors within the five specific locations.

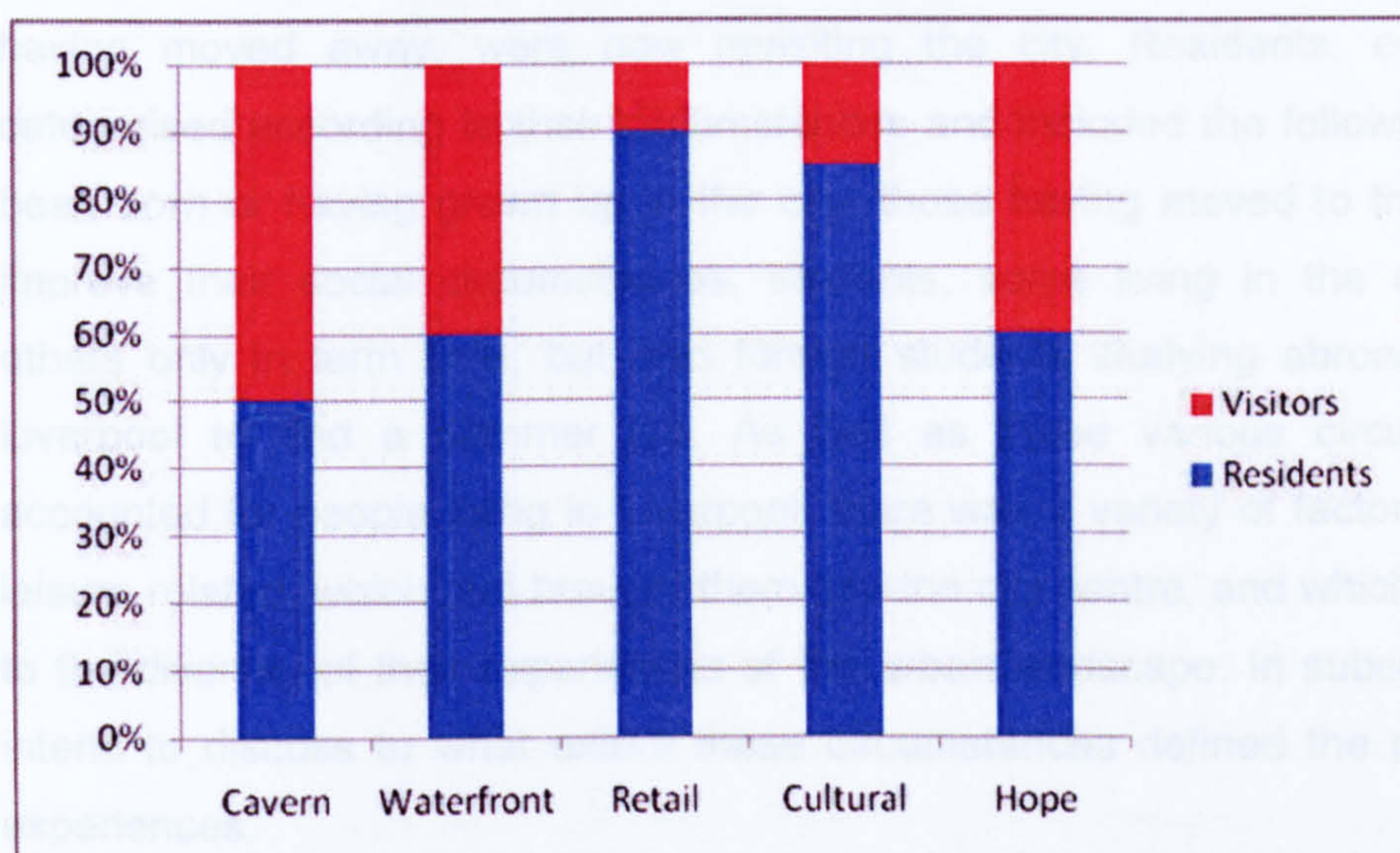


Figure 8.1: Distribution of visitors and residents

In the Cavern Quarter, numbers of residents and visitors were equal, and at the Waterfront and in the Hope Street Quarter, there was not a great difference between the number of residents and visitors. Since many of the city's tourist attractions are to be found in these locations and given the increasing number of visitors coming to Liverpool, it is not surprising to find a considerable number of visitors consuming these spaces. However, in the Cultural Quarter, the number of residents was far higher than that of the visitors. This finding may seem to contradict the findings in the previous chapter based on the participant observation data, which suggested that the area was more popular with visitors than this sample shows. However, since the sample was not intended to be statistically representative, this was not considered to be problematic.

Similarly, in the Retail Quarter, the number of visitors was considerably fewer than that of the residents.

As has already been suggested above, however, the classification of place consumers as resident or visitor is conceptually complex. Visitors to the city centre were not a homogeneous group with the same motivations, but included people coming to the city on a regular basis purely for work-related activity, others coming primarily to work but also using the city's leisure facilities and others looking to invest in property. There were also visitors who had come to the city to use a particular service but had also engaged in some leisure activity while visiting. Among those classed as 'visitors', tourists could be seen as a sub-group, but again differentiated in terms of their motivations and relationship to Liverpool. For example, some had come purely for a holiday and to get to know the city, while others had been born and lived in the city and having moved away, were now revisiting the city. Residents, equally, could be categorised according to their circumstances and included the following: those having been born or having grown up in the city; those having moved to the city to work or improve their social circumstances; students, some living in the city permanently, others only in term time, but also foreign students studying abroad and coming to Liverpool to find a summer job. As well as these various circumstances which accounted for people living in Liverpool, there was a variety of factors, both work and leisure related, which had brought them into the city centre, and which also contributed to the diversity of their experiences of the urban landscape. In subsequent sections I intend to discuss to what extent these circumstances defined the place consumers' experiences.

There were of course other characteristics that distinguished some place consumers from others. While these may not necessarily have any bearing on differences in how the different spaces were consumed, it is still useful to build up some kind of profile of who the place consumers were. Further details of the profile of respondents can be found in Appendix B.

### **8.2.2 Age and Gender**

In total 44 females and 56 males were interviewed. Throughout the 5 locations concerned, the distribution of gender was more or less equal. In terms of age, the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups were more highly represented while the 55-64 age group was the least represented.

### 8.2.3 Ethnicity

Among the 100 respondents there was a range of ethnic groups, the representation of which is depicted in the graph below.

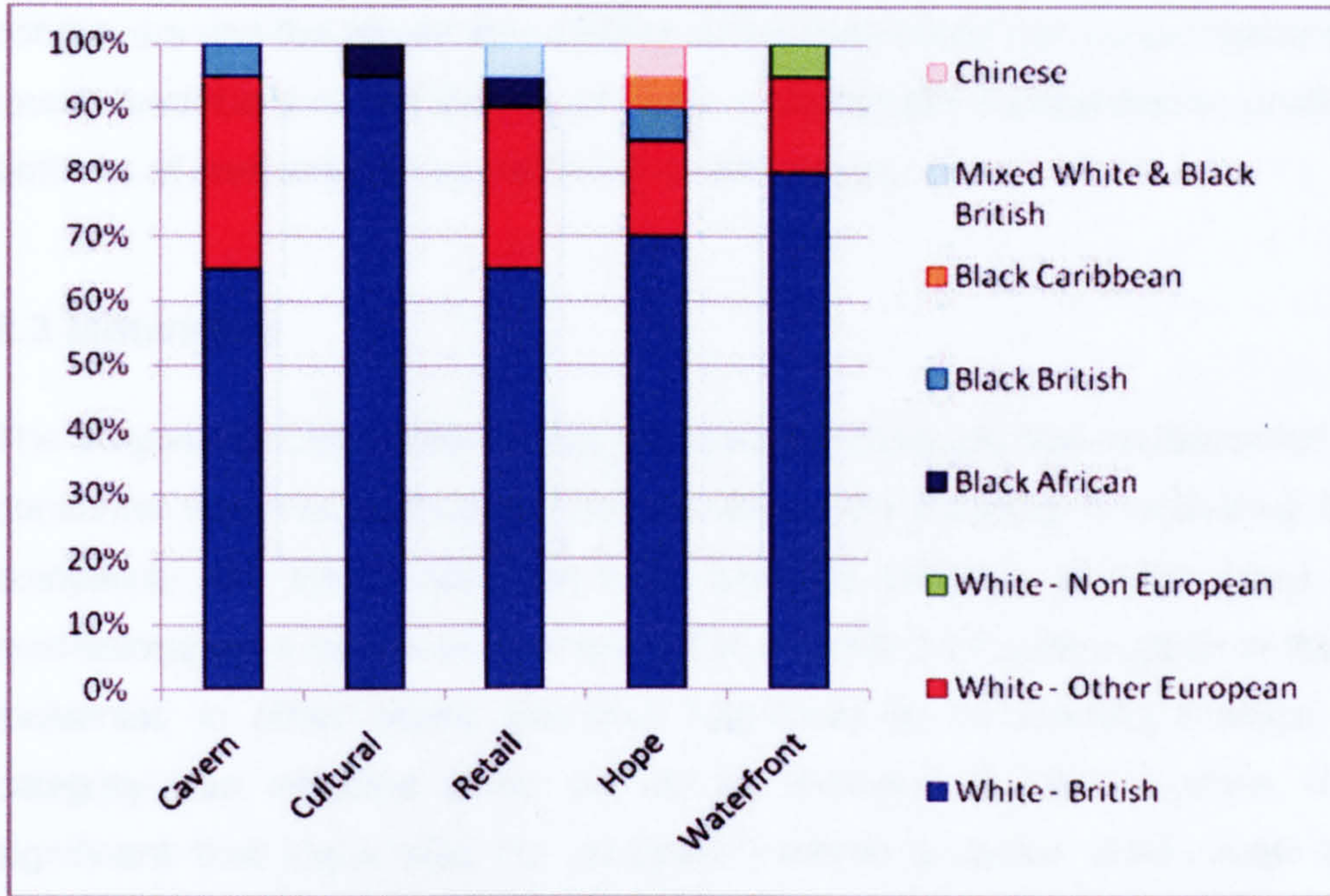


Figure 8.2: Representation of ethnic groups

Seventy five per cent of the respondents as a whole were white and British. The majority of respondents in each of the 5 locations were also White – British. White, non-British Europeans accounted for seventeen per cent of all respondents. The remaining eight per cent included respondents of Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean, Chinese and Kiwi origin. The least ethnically diverse samples were in the Cultural Quarter and the Waterfront. There were a number of ethnic groups represented in the Cavern Quarter although these were all European - either English residents or visitors from other parts of Britain or Europe. The Retail Quarter was probably the location with the most ethnically diverse sample population, especially in terms of residents, although there were also residents from several different ethnic groups in Hope Street Quarter.

### 8.2.4 Summary

As would be expected, place consumers were characterised by their diverse relationships to the city. However, the status of visitor or resident was subjectively defined, thus rendering the use of typologies of consumers as a means of classifying consumption patterns rather problematic. Factors such as age and ethnicity also

accounted for variation in the profile of place consumers. It seems that some social groups are more highly represented in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape than others. Furthermore, certain locations are characterised more by certain social groups than others. However, this data is used as an indicative measure of the range of place consumers and the issues surrounding consumption and non-consumption of the urban tourist landscape rather than to produce a statistically representative profile based on patterns of consumption by particular social groups.

### **8.3 Motivation**

The purpose of this section is not to discuss individually the motivation of each place consumer who was interviewed, but to indicate the diversity of motivating factors, their complexity and their fluidity. An initial analysis indicated whether place consumers' motivations were leisure or work related or whether their consumption of the space was incidental, in other words they just happened to be passing through. This latter category was included since, as will be indicated in later sections, it was quite significant that there was no particular motivating factor which drew these place consumers to the location but nonetheless they may, in some cases, have still engaged in some way with the space.

A more detailed analysis of place consumers' motivations brought to light a number of significant observations. Firstly, whether place consumers' presence in a particular location was intentional or incidental to the features of the location was central to understanding respondents' motivations. It was found that various degrees of intention were involved rather than consumption of a particular space being purely intentional or incidental. For example, some place consumers may not have originally set out with the intention of visiting a particular place or engaging in a particular activity, but at some point they then made a conscious decision which guided them to where they were. Temporal, social and physical factors were often influential in this decision process. Secondly, motivation was usually expressed in terms of a certain activity or a specific place. It was quite interesting to find that in some of the five sample locations, motivations were related to a particular activity rather than a specific place. While the place was not insignificant, the activity was the main consideration. It seems then that activity related motivations were based on push factors stemming from place consumers' needs or wants whereas place related motivations tended to be more related to pull factors. Thirdly, different levels of consumption were apparent in place

consumers' behaviour. These were based on place consumers' level of engagement with the landscape which in turn depended on the extent to which the landscape or particular feature of the landscape appealed to them. Furthermore, place consumers could consume one element of the landscape but not another. Therefore, place consumers waver between consumption and partial consumption of the landscape and culture within it. Here, I disregard non-consumption since simply by being present people are consuming the space or activity they encounter in some way. Figure 8.3 indicates the relationship between these processes. Finally, the analysis indicated that the variety of motivating factors was extensive. People stating the same places for the reason for their visit still often had different motives for visiting those locations. The following interview extracts will indicate the range of motivations. However, for a detailed list of these, please see Appendix B. The points made above support the view that the visitor experience is very diverse and that place consumers themselves are active in creating this diversity. This is demonstrated in more specific terms through the following results, which present the motivations for the consumption of the five sample locations:

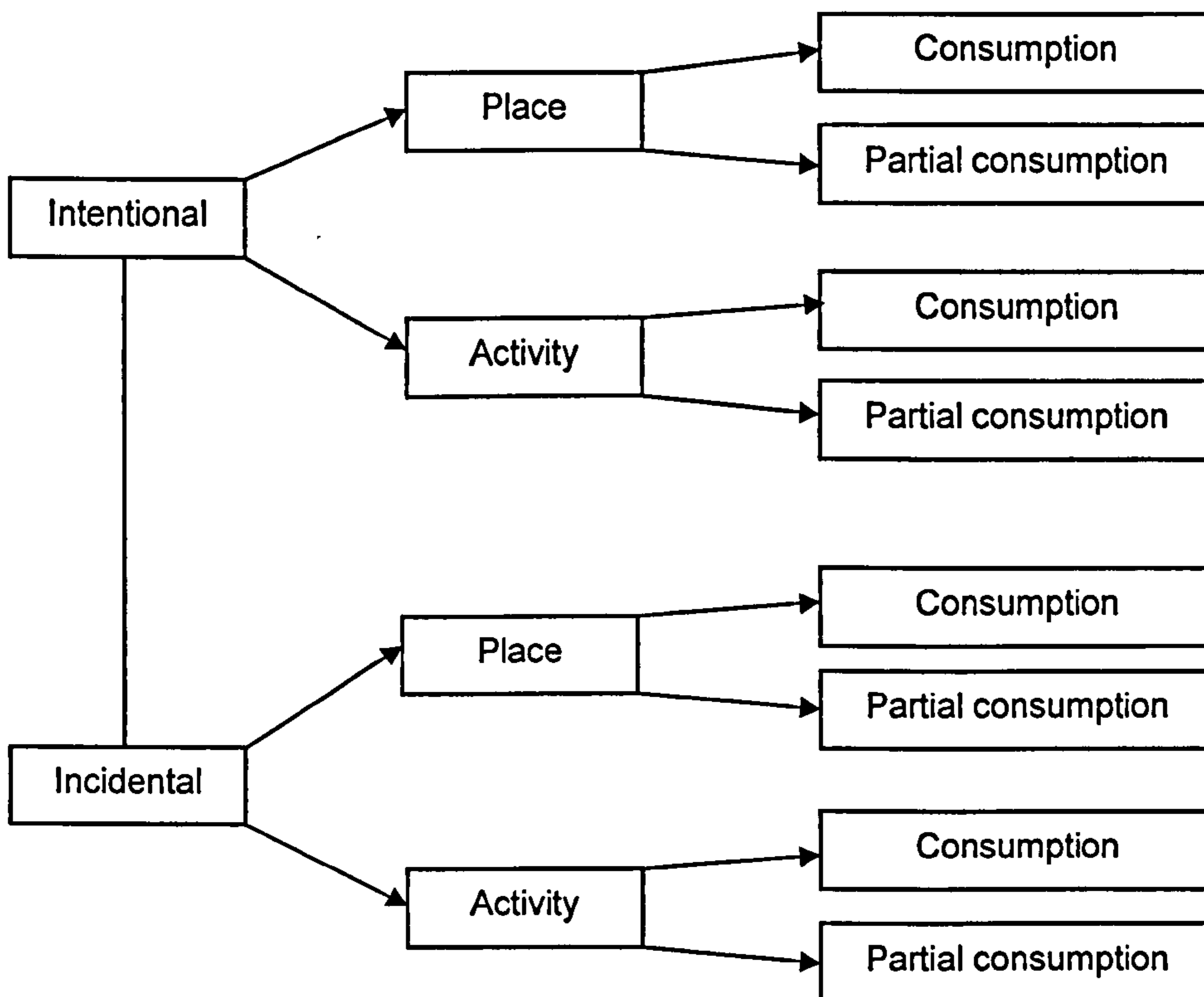


Figure 8.3: Motivation for consuming city centre locations

### 8.3.1 The Cavern Quarter

There was no great difference between the number of residents interviewed in the Cavern Quarter who were there specifically for work and those who were there for leisure. However, the majority of residents in this location were just passing through. On analysing the residents' overall motivation for coming to the city centre, it is clear that this is not always related to the reason for them being specifically in the Cavern Quarter. The majority of residents stated that their overall reason for coming to the city centre was work.

The majority of the visitors interviewed in this specific location, however, were there for leisure. This was also their overall motivation for coming to the city centre in the first place. However, visitors' leisure activity was not always planned but provided a means of filling in time around some other non-work related activity, such as using a public service, which was their main purpose for coming to the city centre. This kind of visitor, primarily motivated neither by work nor leisure, does not appear to be explicitly acknowledged in the current urban tourism literature, although they too are important actors in the urban tourism experience.

Thirteen of the twenty respondents interviewed in this location had come with a specific intention. As expected, The Beatles connection was a strong motivating factor for place consumers visiting this location. All of those who were motivated by an interest in The Beatles were visitors to the city region, which suggests that Beatles attractions are not particularly popular with residents. All except two visitors intentionally came to this part of the city because of its association with The Beatles. Of these, one had not set out to visit any Beatles attractions. He had actually come to Liverpool to renew a passport and was just wandering round the city centre killing time. Initially he had not realised the significance of where he was but as soon as he did, he immediately became interested in his surroundings,

*Is that the original Cavern Club? I'm a Beatles fanatic...Oh I might have a look in there.....I didn't realise that's where the Cavern was. (pc 62)<sup>1</sup>*

The fact that he had not realised where he was raises questions about signage and information for what is claimed to be Liverpool's most significant tourism product. This example, however, also indicates the incidental consumption of space which, as mentioned above, constitutes a gap in urban tourism theory.

Another visitor to the city was just spending some time looking round since he had some time to spare but had not really planned to come to the Cavern Quarter. He was born in Liverpool and had moved away as a child, but had since returned to visit family on several occasions and therefore was to some extent familiar with the location. He explained,

*I was just walking through. I wasn't going to anywhere in particular, just walking round and taking my time.....I was walking along and all of a sudden I just thought "Oh Mathew Street, I'll have a walk down there." No particular reason. Obviously at this time in the morning there's nothing going on. (pc 63)*

The encounters above indicate that motivation is more fluid and spontaneous than has previously been suggested and therefore from a theoretical point of view is difficult to assemble into neat, distinct categories.

Other respondents had come intentionally to the Cavern Quarter but not to visit Beatles attractions. One local young man described how he had come to busk there due to its popularity with tourists,

*We'll stay here for a few hours, like, but we go to other parts of the city and Chester, but mainly round here because there's lots of tourists. This part of the street is probably the best for playing. (pc 37)*

Another local resident was looking for a venue for his band to play. However, he added that he also came there regularly at the weekends anyway,

*I usually come here of a Saturday to see a band that I usually watch. It's generally here I go out....I like the atmosphere with live bands. I prefer live music than going to clubs. (pc 9)*

Nonetheless, unlike the visitors to Liverpool, he was not so motivated by the legacy of The Beatles as the continuing function of the Cavern Club as a place for live bands to perform. Nonetheless, these last two respondents, although they were not drawing on The Beatles association in the same way as the visitors, still engaged with this aspect of the Cavern Quarter in the sense that when they played there they reproduced Beatles' songs.

Other respondents, however, were not attracted at all by these characteristics of the place and were simply passing through. One resident, making his way home after a job interview, recognised the significance of the location but admitted that it was irrelevant to his being there,



*I'm just on my way home...Even though The Beatles used to play here, it's just a short cut. (pc 50)*

Another passing resident challenged the significance of the area more strongly,

*Tourists should get here and realise that there's a lot more to it than coming to Mathew Street. I just happened to be cutting through Mathew Street but normally I'd avoid this sort of area. (pc 73)*

### *Summary*

It is evident, then, that the range of motivations for visiting this location is quite diverse. Some respondents engaged with the location and were motivated by a specific place or building, others had in mind a particular activity but the character of the location was also significant to their decision to come there, and for others the location bore no relevance at all. For visitors, The Beatles narrative tended to dominate their encounter with this area, although, their own personal narratives still individualised their experience. Residents tended to be more blasé and their use of the space was expressed in less emotive terms than that of the visitors.

### **8.3.2 The Cultural Quarter**

While a couple of residents had come to this location for work-related activity, the majority were there for leisure. There were also several who were just passing through. However, when asked why they were in the city centre in the first place the number of those who were there for work and leisure were almost equal, while two of them actually lived in the city centre. Only three visitors featured in the sample for this location. Of those one had come for work and the other two for leisure. Their overall reasons for coming to the city centre were the same as the purpose for them coming to the Cultural Quarter.

Of the twenty respondents interviewed in this area, thirteen had come with a specific purpose. All but one were visiting World Museum Liverpool, the Walker Art Gallery, Picton Library or the Empire Theatre. Therefore, this area of the city centre appears to be predominantly associated with the consumption of culture in the strictest sense. The respondents visiting these attractions included both residents and visitors, though those visiting the library were all residents. Respondents visiting these attractions came with varying degrees of intent. A mother and daughter had come to Liverpool from Wales specifically to see an exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery,

*We've come to go to the Walker Gallery because she wants to see the exhibition of clothing and of course it's a lovely place to come..... we're not really going to do shops are we because we can do that at home....we've just come from the ferry and up Dale Street because we were coming to the Walker. We weren't strolling, were we? We had a definite purpose in coming. (pc 47)*

There was obviously a clear motivation for this visit. However, it seems that apart from the functional aspect of the exhibition, the aesthetic aspect of the gallery was also a motivating factor. Furthermore, the visit to the gallery was not just about visiting the exhibition but also involved the social element of spending time together.

Another respondent, a Liverpool resident, was also planning on visiting the same exhibition although her motivation did not seem as compelling as the previous respondents',

*I'm going to have a look at the paper and walk through, take a look at, there's like a clothing display on, I can't remember the name of it, in the Walker, so I'm going to go to the Walker for a few hours and kill some time and then I'm going to go to work. I was going to go to the museum but apparently it is closed; someone told me it's closed. (pc 34)*

The other reason for respondents to come to this location specifically was St. John's Gardens, a public garden where events are also sometimes held. On one particular day, a Liverpool resident had come to watch the King's Regiment parade which ended in the garden although she also intended to visit the museum. She explained,

*Well I came down to see the Kings Regiment first of all and then I'm going into the Museum to buy some crystals and T.J.s to buy some wool and then Myrtle Street because the Brouhaha festival is beginning there and walking to Princes Park and then Bold Street to sort of finish off my shopping. I always do a circular tour of Liverpool on a Saturday and see everything that's going on. (pc 89)*

In contrast to the previous respondent, she made time to come to this location rather than using the space to fill some spare time. Others' use of the space, however, was more spontaneous as this following comment indicates,

*I've walked down to town to do a bit of shopping.....I thought I'd have a sit down in the park and read the paper and then I'll carry on. (pc 45)*

For other respondents, it was incidental that they were in that specific location. One resident was just waiting for a lift although he went on to add that he did actually use the space on other occasions,

*Yes, it's helpful because I actually work in the city centre so at lunch time, for example, I often go across and have a look at things like the museum, because I think it's very interesting. I think the library is very nice. I go to the Walker quite often. I mean it's handy for me because as I said, I'm here already. (pc 78)*

Despite this, he seemed to suggest that he wouldn't explicitly come to the city centre to visit one of these attractions explaining that,

*We tend not to come in at weekends really.....We both work in the week and tend to be quite tired at weekends so that might have something to do with it. (pc 78)*

Another visitor came to the area quite regularly because of work but never really got a chance to look round,

*I've just driven over and then I'm off again tomorrow morning...by the time I get to the hotel, dinner, bath, it's time to go to bed. I haven't got time to go visiting. (pc 80)*

However, it also seems he wouldn't be particularly inclined to,

*I honestly can't say I would. The city I come from, Newcastle, is unbeatable. So no, I don't think I'd come for a holiday. (pc 80)*

### *Summary*

Judging by respondents' motivations, the consumption of this space appears to be largely connected to the cultural attractions within it. For many respondents, being there was by no means circumstantial since they had come to visit a particular feature. Nonetheless each respondent consumed the space in a slightly different way. Some respondents, for example, claimed that they visited the museum and gallery on an informal basis to fill in time. For others, however, their visit was planned and characterised by a sense of anticipation. Some respondents were not there to visit the cultural establishments, but considered the adjoining gardens a pleasant spot to sit for a while. Unlike the Cavern Quarter, the attractions were visited by visitors and residents alike, which suggests that the cultural heritage of the location appeals to both.

### 8.3.3 The Retail Quarter

The proportion of residents in this area engaging in leisure activity was high. A few were there for work while a couple were just passing through. The number of residents whose prime motivation for coming to the city centre for leisure was almost as high, while the number who had come to the city centre for work were lower than those who had come for leisure but still higher than those who had come specifically to this location for work. This suggests that some residents may spend some leisure time in this area before or after work or during a break from work. Only two visitors were interviewed in this location, both of whom were there for leisure. However, one of them had primarily come to Liverpool to use a public service which was not available in the area where they lived. Again this indicates the variety of motivating factors involved in place consumers' use of the urban landscape.

All of the respondents interviewed in this location had come with a specific intention. However, unlike at the Cavern Quarter or the Cultural Quarter, they expressed motivation only in terms of the activity they had come to engage in rather than in terms of a specific place. However, not everybody was there just to shop. One elderly resident had been dragged along but preferred to pass his time otherwise,

*Well my wife wanted to come to the shops. I don't really like coming to the shops so I'm just sitting here till she comes back....I just sit around you know, do a bit of reading. (pc 55)*

On the other hand, for another elderly resident, coming to the shops was also a way of passing some time,

*I'm 72 years of age so you've got to think what to do and where for your day, so where most of it goes is in the city. So basically I use my bus pass, get into town and have a walk round and just watch life go past.....I've done my few bits of shopping. I've got a bit of a gammy leg so I'll sit here and rest for a bit and then go and get the bus. (52)*

For other respondents, the location provided a convenient meeting point, a place to sit and eat lunch or just to pass some time. For example, one young lady on her lunch break commented,

*I like this place because it is one of those places that has got benches. There aren't many places that you can sit and also it's the nearest place to where I work. (pc 27)*

Another young resident sitting eating lunch explained,

*I come into town most days. I go to the gym. Pretty much centralised. Like Williamson Square, I go to the Job Centre here because it's accessible, most of the shops, you've got HMV, you've got Virgin, pretty close to the Adelphi gym, so I find it convenient. It's a convenience issue really. (pc 75)*

This summed up most people's responses in that they came to this location because it was functional. There were, however, some features of this area which did incite a more enthusiastic reaction. One young resident sitting waiting for his sister to go shopping remarked,

*It's alright, better than what it was a while ago. I like the fountain, it's good for the kids to play in, there was nothing here before was there? I like the markets they have now and again, the world food markets. (pc 28)*

Another resident commented on an outdoor dance performance which had been put on in the shopping area,

*We've been shopping before and then we're just coming to get the bus home. We just stopped because we saw this....There should be more. (pc 87)*

### *Summary*

On the whole, then, respondents did not express the same kind of attachment to the Retail Quarter as to the other two locations already discussed above. Their responses were more practical than emotive thus highlighting the predominantly functional nature of this part of the city centre. However, elderly residents appeared to derive pleasure from the social element of the area. Furthermore, temporary cultural events and features did seem to make respondents engage more with the space.

#### **8.3.4 Hope Street Quarter**

Here again, leisure was the reason most residents gave for being in this location. Two worked there and one just happened to be passing. The number of residents who were in the city centre for work was almost equal to those who were there for leisure. Three stated that they lived in the city centre and in fact in Hope Street Quarter itself. This indicates that there is a strong residential element to this area which does not feature in the previous locations. In terms of the visitors in this location, the majority were spending leisure time there, while two were there for a work-related purpose. However, with regard to them visiting Liverpool city centre as a whole, the visitors' motivations were distributed equally between leisure and work. Of these, one respondent, was spending leisure time in Hope Street Quarter but had actually come to Liverpool to

invest in property. This again adds another dimension to the spectrum of motivations relating to the consumption of the city space. It should be noted that university students were not greatly represented in this location since the interviews were carried out in the summer months when the majority of students are on summer break. However, during term time, students create a strong presence in this area. This again reminds us how consumption patterns are not fixed but fluctuate according to, in this case, temporal factors.

All but one of the respondents in this location were intentional consumers of a specific attraction or characteristic associated with this part of the city centre. The main motivating factor for people visiting this area was the cathedrals, although they engaged with these in different ways. The cathedrals attracted both visitors and residents. Some respondents had come with a fixed idea of what they wanted from the experience like the following resident who commented,

*..the city is quite beautiful and it's nice to visit the Albert Dock and things like that and the cathedral, that's why we're here now. We also want to see the Anglican Cathedral. We are Catholics and we'd like to see the difference between this church and the church in Poland. (pc 23)*

Likewise, another resident was also visiting the Metropolitan Cathedral for religious reasons. However, he visited regularly and on this occasion was also motivated by the space outside the cathedral just as a place to be,

*I've come to the cathedral for mass at 5:15.....I probably come about twice a week and with it being such a nice day, I thought I'd come earlier and sit outside on the steps for a bit. I live in the city about five minutes away from here. (pc 25)*

Others had come with a more open agenda such as this visitor, who explained,

*Well I suppose we all have some religious background, don't we, from the past. We're not great historians or architectural geniuses but we just like to take in a bit of culture. So we've come to see it and find out what it's all about. (pc 13)*

He suggested that while the religious aspect wasn't necessarily a key factor of the visit, having some sort of religious background did play some role in interpreting the space. However, he also indicated that the building could equally be considered from a historical or architectural perspective although none of these constituted an overriding motive for the visit, since his own personal interpretation would be most significant.

Other respondents' consumption of the space was more circumstantial; however, they still seemed to engage with the cathedrals in some way. One visitor near the Metropolitan Cathedral stated in quite a matter of fact way,

*We're rehearsing for a show called Bollywood Steps which is being performed outside the cathedral. So we're rehearsing and just sorting out rigging and lights and stuff like that. (pc 58)*

However, he went on to express his admiration of the location,

*....this part is lovely.....I think the building's amazing, I've never seen anything like this before. (pc 58)*

A resident, sitting by Liverpool Cathedral explained,

*I'm just having a relax because I've been on my feet all day and so I'm just going to relax before I go home.....it's nice sitting here because I can see the cathedral and it's warm because it's in the sun as well, it's lovely.....I always walk past here because I only live five minutes past the Cathedral. (pc 40)*

For her the location and the cathedral were very familiar but still they engaged her, although she was not as overwhelmed as the performer by the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Some respondents, on the other hand, weren't motivated by the cathedrals in particular but by the general characteristics of the area. One resident stated,

*....this is my favourite part of Liverpool city centre so I'm just having a little stroll before I go home because it's a nice evening. (pc 96)*

Then specified what in particular it was that attracted him,

*Well, it's Georgian and it's beautiful, it's classical. So, the architecture.....and it's quite laid back, so it's really nice. (pc 96)*

Another resident's explanation of why he was there was more mundane,

*I'm looking for a job. I live on Hope Street. I need some money. I'm going to go to get the newspaper and go for a coffee then look for a job maybe on the Internet or go down into town. (pc 59)*

However, his actual description of the area was more colourful and inspired,

*I love it, it's cool. It's mostly chilled out. It gets a bit noisy at night but it's alright, it's nice. (pc 59)*

The respondent comments on how this area tends to be relatively quiet, however, he also indicates that he doesn't regard this area as being in the city centre as such,

because he mentions that he may go “down into town” later. The perception of where the city centre lies was an issue which was addressed by other residents also, although usually inadvertently. Quite a few residents tended to view ‘town’, in other words the city centre, as equating basically with the retail areas. Therefore, the conceptualisation of the city centre seems to depend on individuals’ perceptions and use of the space.

### *Summary*

Analysis of this location indicated that the cathedrals are a significant feature of this part of Liverpool’s urban landscape. However, although based on a relatively small sample, the ways in which the cathedrals were consumed were quite diverse. Irrespective of the cathedrals or any other particular attraction, this location seemed to have an overall appeal as a relatively quiet and pleasant place to spend time, mostly among residents who were more familiar with it. Visitors, however, tended to comment on the low level of activity as something not necessarily positive. They seemed to suggest that having more people around would add to their experience of the place. In many cases while the landscape and its features provided a context for place consumers to carry out activities, in many cases it was their own personal motivations which brought them to the spaces where they were. The majority of respondents had intentionally chosen to engage with this area which suggests that it is an area that not many people just pass through, perhaps because of its location on the edge of the city centre.

### **8.3.5 The Waterfront**

A high proportion of residents had come to the Waterfront area for leisure. Two were there primarily for work but were also spending some leisure time there. The majority had come to the city centre for leisure while a few had travelled in for work and one lived in the city centre. Again this indicates that some residents come to the city centre for work but then spend some leisure time at the Waterfront at some point during the working day. Interestingly, although there is a lot of residential space on the Waterfront, and in particular within the Albert Dock complex, which is the main architectural feature of this location, residents of this area did not feature in the sample. This could be due to the design and nature of this particular space. This would suggest that the ‘flows’ of people are more regulated than in other locations and the behaviour of residents of this space and visitors is quite different.



The visitors in this location were mostly there for leisure. However, one was working at the Albert Dock and another had come to take her children to the Manx ferry. The reasons for these visitors coming to Liverpool in the first place were the same as those for which they were at the Waterfront apart from one visitor who had come to Liverpool to renew a passport and was killing time at the Waterfront.

All of the respondents at the Waterfront were intentional consumers of the space. Positioned on the very edge of the city centre, most people would not come here without a reason. On the whole, respondents came to the location based on their own motivation and expressed this in relation to some kind of activity rather than to a particular attraction. One elderly couple explained why they had come,

*Just to have a little mooch round and lunch and coffee. We live on the other side of the river so it's just pleasant to come across on the boat. Nice and fresh....It's an outing for us. We're retired now; we've got more time on our hands so we do these little trips. (pc 22)*

Another local couple had also come to spend some time by the docks, however, their experience was more rooted in routine and the ferry was just something else to do,

*We're just out for the day. We'll sit here for a while and then we'll go into town and have a drink, have something to eat. Well that's what we normally do on Sundays....or we go on the ferry, nothing special like..... (pc 42)*

Despite this rather habitual activity, they are passionate about the location,

*I love it. We have a walk round. We don't actually go inside the dock but we have a walk round the perimeter....It's just old shops in there now so I'm not interested in walking round the shops. (pc 42)*

However, unlike the other couple they avoid the inside of the dock since it doesn't really appeal to them.

Another resident used the space in a more spontaneous way and once again was more motivated by the promenade and the view than the Albert Dock itself,

*Well I work down the road at the Port of Liverpool Building so I've got the afternoon off and thought I might as well come out in the sun and enjoy the view for a bit. I was going to go down to the gym but I saw it was too sunny and thought I don't fancy that now. (pc 7)*

Another resident was passing time at the Pier Head, although he didn't particularly engage with the location,

*Well I'm on the streets, I'm homeless and I just walk around all day. When the day centre opens I just go there...I'm here just to have a look around. (pc 66)*

Other respondents, however, engaged more. Photography was an activity which featured quite frequently at the Waterfront. One resident was particularly inspired by the Albert Dock, however, his motivation was to take photographs and the landscape appeared to be secondary to this,

*I've just come to take photos. I'm doing my own website. I've done quite a bit on the Wirral and I thought I'd do a bit on the Albert Dock. It's just a hobby, something to do. (pc 21)*

In contrast a press photographer from outside the local area was using the location in a very different way,

*I'm a photographer. There's a Hollyoaks party in here tonight so I'm just waiting for celebs to turn up and get pictures of them. (pc 68)*

In this instance the location was almost irrelevant since it was the local celebrity culture which he was trying to capture, although this is linked in some way to the more 'glamorous' and 'trendy' style of the restaurants and bars at the Albert Dock.

Other respondents' intentions were more closely related to the attractions at the Albert Dock. One resident stated,

*I've come down to have a look at the Maritime Museum. I was hoping to have a look at the Museum of Liverpool Life but apparently it closed a month ago, so I've just been all round the Maritime Museum. (pc 44)*

However, her plans aren't fully realised and she is somewhat disappointed. This incident highlights the contingent nature of the visitor experience.

Some respondents' presence in the area was more circumstantial and while their original intention was not necessarily to consume the space in any particular way, eventually they did. For example one visitor to the city explained,

*I only came down to see a mate of mine but he's not there, he only comes at night time. He works at the radio station. (pc 31)*

However, he then went on to add,

*That's fantastic that Maritime Museum, we've been in today. Very interesting....we came here because our coach goes back at 5. (pc 31)*

Another visitor who had stumbled on the area by chance was less impressed with it,

*Because the UK ID and Passport offices have merged I'm here today collecting a passport.....I couldn't find somewhere to have breakfast down here so I wandered over to the ferry terminal but I think it needs something here rather than more set back so it would have been nice to have somewhere to sit and have breakfast looking out from here. (pc 19)*

Similarly, another visitor to the city had come to use the Manx ferry service, and was just killing time at the Albert Dock,

*My kids are going to the Isle of Man, they're going on the ferry..... As soon as the boat's in they're off then we go back home.....we've been round the Albert Dock, round the shops and stuff. That's about it really. We're not sure what time the boat's coming in. There's been some problems with the boat, so it's a bit late. (pc 41)*

In these last encounters, the attractions serve the purpose of filling in time and therefore are not central to the respondents' experiences. Nonetheless they still have an impact on them. This highlights the complexity of motivation and the spontaneity of the urban tourist experience.

### *Summary*

The waterfront area appears to appeal to both residents and visitors for various reasons. However, it seems that designation of the space as a World Heritage Site and the significance of this is not really recognised by the respondents. The maritime heritage with which the location is associated did not explicitly feature in respondents' motivations. These findings tend to support Mellor's (1991) view that, "Most visitors to the Dock amble around relatively aimlessly" (107) and "few visitors to the Dock are thinking about heritage, history or nostalgia." (113).

## **8.4 Discussion**

What we can draw from the preceding observations, then, is that while some respondents' motivation for being in the city centre was not necessarily related to leisure, leisure often featured as the reason for their being in the specific location where they were. So, for example, although their main motive for being in the city centre may have been work, they used lunch breaks as part of their leisure time to meet friends, go shopping, and so on. This might suggest that leisure is becoming more interspersed throughout the working day as the construction of the urban

landscape makes it possible for place consumers to dip in and out of leisure activity. For other place consumers, their work was related to the production of culture, for example band members or buskers. These respondents mentioned how due to the nature of their work, their work and leisure time were often combined. Certainly, to some extent then, the de-differentiation of work, leisure, tourism and general daily activity is present in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. In terms of researching this field, this implies that the consumption of culture should not only be considered within the context of leisure time. The broader framework adopted in this project has allowed for a fuller understanding of the range of motivations that bring people to the city centre and the various ways in which culture is consumed within it.

Another point which comes to light is that motivations are not set in stone. Place consumers' activity is not governed by a decision which was made pre-visit to do or see something in particular, but is spontaneous and contingent. This issue has been addressed to some extent by Leiper's (1990:374) theory of primary, secondary and tertiary nuclei which states that,

A primary nucleus is an attribute of a place, a potential tourist destination, which is influential in a traveler's decision about where to go. That implies information is available to the traveler about the attribute and is active, pre-visit, in stimulating motivation in the person to travel towards the place where the attribute can be experienced. A secondary nucleus is an attribute known to a person pre-visit, but not significant in decisions about the itinerary. A tertiary nucleus is an attribute unknown pre-visit, but discovered by the individual after arriving in a destination region.

This leads us to the question of how salient attractions are to place consumers' experiences. The results discussed above indicate that an attraction is part of a three way relationship or system, as Leiper (1990:3371) and MacCannell (1999:41) have argued. According to Leiper,

*A tourist attraction is a system comprising three elements: a tourist or human element, a nucleus or central element, and a marker or informative element. A tourist attraction comes into existence when the three elements are connected. (1990:371, emphasis in the original).*

Place consumers are part of this system and without them attractions would be meaningless and therefore not exist. The results also appear to confirm Gunn's (1972) and Leiper's (1990) theory that the central feature or nucleus is not necessarily a sight but could be an event, person or object. The respondents did in fact cite these different

features as motivating factors. What these models, however, particularly MacCannell's (1999), do overlook, is that it is not only tourists who visit attractions but that other place consumers are equally involved in the attraction system, especially in the case of urban tourism.

The respondents' comments also raised the much debated issue of place consumers' agency in this attraction system. In other words whether place consumers are pulled by attractions or pushed by their own motivations. The sometimes incidental nature of place consumers' consumption of some spaces and the fact that some respondents expressed their motivation in terms of an activity or something more abstract, rather than a particular attraction indicates that place consumers are in fact pushed by their own motivations. However, others were clearly motivated by specific attractions, which leads me to conclude, as Richards (2002) does that both push and pull factors are involved and therefore place consumers' experiences are based on a negotiation between structure and agency.

Relating this to consumption theory, the underlying notions of supply and demand are brought to the surface. Therefore, characteristics of a consumer system can be detected within the urban tourist landscape. However, the aspect of supply and demand, as Sharpley (2000:381) points out, focuses predominantly on the economic or utilitarian element of the consumption process. It is possible that closer parallels could be drawn between consumer theory and the consumption of tourism and culture. For example, we need to investigate whether culture has a use beyond the utilitarian aspect of (other) commodities. It has in fact been argued that material goods have long been assigned a symbolic value over and above their functional use (Sharpley, 2000:383). This is also what Bourdieu (1984) infers with his discussion of how taste can be considered as a form of social distinction. In order to assess the value of culture as consumed within the urban tourist landscape we need to ascertain how culture is consumed and what it represents according to those who are actually consuming it. Unfortunately, analysing motivations alone does not allow us to achieve this. This thesis will enhance knowledge of this area by exploring on a deeper level how place consumers define and perceive culture and how this relates to various dimensions of their experience of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

The problem with using typologies of place consumers, then, is that it reduces the complexity of the individual's urban tourist experience. However, it does help to understand to a certain extent how urban tourist areas are used. Models such as those devised by Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000:131-2) and Page (1995:48) do capture the diversity of motivations and users of the urban tourist landscape to some extent, the former possibly more than the latter. Hall and Page (2002:160) acknowledge the convergence of tourist and recreational activity in urban destinations, their focus, though, is perhaps more on the tourism element. However, the above analysis indicates that place consumers' consumption patterns and motivations are much more fluid and complex than any of these texts recognise. For example, during the course of their visit to the city centre place consumers may diverge from their original intentions or in fact engage in a number of activities. The stated motivation for visiting the city centre is often quite different to the reason for which they were in the specific location of the interview. Furthermore in many cases the consumption of the city space, especially by residents, is incidental. Place consumers are often motivated by their own agendas rather than some reified attraction, which reminds us that the consumption process is defined by the forces of both structure and agency. The following list of key motivating factors demonstrates this point:

- Work
- Look for work
- Day out
- Holiday
- Visit attraction
- Shopping
- Attend event
- Socialise / social contact
- Relax / rest
- Use a public service
- Pub / club
- Restaurant / café
- Kill time
- On way to somewhere else
- Gym
- Walk / stroll
- Take photographs
- Invest in property

So while motivation is an important part of understanding the consumption of tourism and leisure, research should not be limited to this one aspect. It is important to know why people consume certain spaces and associated experiences, but it is equally crucial to discover how they are consumed. As Sharpley (2000:387) concludes, "much research into tourist-consumer behaviour has not allowed for the fact that any single tourism product may be consumed in as many ways as there are tourists." A focus on

motivation and tourist typologies in tourism research has over-simplified the nature of tourism consumption, and in particular, I would add, consumption of the urban landscape.

On the whole the complexity of the urban tourism experience does not appear to be captured in the related literature. Different consumers are attracted to different areas for different reasons. Therefore, the urban tourist landscape is certainly not uniform throughout, because different areas are physically but also socially diverse. The reasons for this social diversity can be brought to light by considering individual place consumers' experiences in more detail, as will be seen in the following chapters. To begin with, the next chapter will discuss in what sense Liverpool's urban tourist landscape can be considered as a socio-cultural construction and the factors which influence different readings and uses of this space.

### **Note**

<sup>1</sup> 'pc' indicates that the quote is taken from an interview with a place consumer.

## 9. Space, Culture and Power

### 9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set out to address the aim of understanding how place consumers use and interpret Liverpool's urban tourist landscape in relation to the physical and social features which define it. In this way, this chapter is related to the motivation of place consumers, as was the previous one. However, here, this issue is considered from a deeper conceptual perspective, which also reveals the ways in which place consumers are restricted or prevented from using certain spaces. The results of this chapter indicate that the culture of the landscape is determined by a series of power relationships, composed of the various features inherent within it and connected to it. I use the term culture here to denote the cultural associations of the landscape, but also the norms and behaviour which produce and reproduce the ways in which it is consumed. In this sense, the relationship between space, culture and power is significant in defining place consumers' experiences. The findings presented below, based on respondents' references to their use of the five sample locations, demonstrate this aspect of their experiences.

While one respondent argues against this politicised aspect of the landscape, claiming that,

*The city is here to be shared, it's not just for certain people, it's to be shared, the whole thing. (pc 37),*

respondents' comments on the whole suggest that there is a political element inherent in the urban tourist landscape which predisposes some to consume it but not others. In fact, there are a number of factors which influence the ways in which various locations within the landscape are consumed, or not, and by whom. These include social profiles (i.e. the presence of various social groups or individuals), ideological factors (i.e. the discourses which influence certain spaces through various institutions such as the media, tourist board, council, and society in general), the physical infrastructure, including the physical structure of the space itself and the facilities available within it, and temporal factors such as time and weather. There often exists an interplay of these forces, which once again highlights the dialectics of place. In this sense there is, perhaps, no cultural hegemony but a flow of forces which empower some while encumbering others.



## 9.2 Social Profiles

It was found that the social profile of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape was a significant factor in creating its place culture and in determining how and whether people consumed it. While the number of place consumers interviewed in each sample location was only relatively small compared to the actual population of those locations, therefore making it difficult to generalise on the basis of these findings, respondents' comments indicated that the social profile of locations within the city centre varied and influenced their consumption or non-consumption of these spaces.

### 9.2.1 Social Groups

The kind of people who frequent an area determined to what extent respondents' visited and entered into cultural and social engagement within that area. For example, the following resident commented on the areas which he would go to on a 'night out',

*I go to Concert Square now and then on nights out, Mathew Street the odd time but at the weekend it's mainly full of tourists, people over for the weekend, so I would normally avoid there. (pc 75)*

His remarks suggest that in the Cavern Quarter, due to the number of tourists who visit the pubs and bars at the weekend, there is a different atmosphere than in Concert Square, one of the busiest areas for pubbing and clubbing in the city centre, which he tends to prefer. In a different sense, an elderly lady explained how the social composition of a place prevented her from visiting,

*I mean I'm a widow so I don't so much come to the theatre in the evening or anything like that anyway. (pc 22)*

Lack of companionship precludes her from engaging in an activity which conventionally is carried out by couples or groups.

### 9.2.2 Social Behaviour

Other respondents referred more specifically to the behaviour of people in certain locations which influenced their own consumption patterns. One resident explained how she preferred to go for a drink at the Albert Dock than elsewhere in the city centre because people's behaviour there is more restrained,

*Normally a different kind of people to the people you get in the centre. Not as drunk and abusive. (pc 98)*

Similarly, an older respondent expressed his preference for certain establishments along Hope Street,

*Those three places, the Everyman, the Cathedral, Philharmonic pub you tend to find nice people there. You can go there on your own and you'll always find someone with interesting conversation or you can be left alone. And the people who work in the same places are really nice people. I find they're nice people anyway. (pc 16)*

Other respondents, however, were particularly discouraged from spending time in certain parts of the city centre. Some residents described how they felt intimidated by the presence of certain social groups in St. John's Gardens and how this changed their perceptions of the park,

*Sometimes it is quite dodgy around here you know. I saw you sitting there that is why I sat next to you, you get a lot of drunks, it sort of ruins the park really. (pc 34)*

While the presence of drunks doesn't totally discourage the lady from using the space, it impacts how she uses it. Another resident, however, suggests that the presence of certain groups actually discourages him from using the space at all,

*This park here, I think this was a lovely park once, there seems to be a lot of drunks in there now. I don't like going there because you see the drunks sitting round swigging out of their brown paper bags. You see the yobbos in there, the scallies, the hoodies in there, just creating damage. There's also been a few deaths in there over time. It kind of puts one off. (pc 8)*

The behaviour of these social groups, or at least the behaviour associated with them, transforms the gardens from a pleasant space to spend time, to an area to be avoided.

### **9.2.3 Social Density**

Finally, the number of people within a given location also influenced respondents' reactions, as is the case with the following respondent who refers to her use of the Waterfront,

*I don't know, I just like going down there and sometimes there aren't that many people, especially if you go later in the day. (pc 11)*

Usually urban spaces are associated with social vibrancy, however, this respondent suggests that the reason she finds this place appealing is the lack of people.

## 9.2.4 Summary

Respondents' comments tend to suggest that the social profile of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape varies according to specific areas within it and also in terms of the time of day or week. I will return to this latter point later in this chapter. Social characteristics of the people who tend to frequent an area were considered influential in determining to what extent respondents would engage with that area. In particular, the behaviour associated with specific social groups was mentioned as a factor that influenced respondents' decision to visit a specific area or not.

## 9.3. Ideological Factors

It emerged from respondents' views that various ideologies impacted on their use of space.

### 9.3.1 Socio-Economic Status

Class ideologies featured quite strongly amongst the responses given, with certain social classes being defined in terms of the cultural activity which is conventionally associated with them. The following quote taken from an interviewee in the Cultural Quarter is indicative of this kind of response,

*I think a lot of people are intimidated by so called culture; a lot of people wouldn't dream of going in the Walker Art Gallery or think it is a bit high brow. You just go in in your free time and learn to appreciate the art. A lot of people are put off by that. I think it's good that kids growing up now, they've got people like Steven Gerrard promoting the Walker Art Gallery because he's really into art and stuff and that is a big massive audience of people who are into footy and wouldn't dream he liked modern art. We have got all the initiatives now for people to get into culture and we've got all the technology. You don't have to go the museum now you can just go on the internet and see a few pictures. (pc 34)*

This resident draws on a number of interesting points. Firstly, she refers to the stereotype surrounding museums and galleries and how this represents a barrier to certain people, preventing them from using the cultural establishments in this location. Then she goes on to describe how mixing icons from popular culture with more high-brow culture, as has been done in promotional messages for these establishments, can transform them in ideological terms and therefore make them more desirable. She also refers to the concept of virtual consumption of art via the internet and how this makes culture more accessible but does not necessarily encourage people to visit museums and galleries.

Another resident in the Cultural Quarter also touched on similar issues, emphasising how certain museums in Liverpool have been transformed in order to engage more with people. While he himself is a keen visitor, he realises that there is still a boundary in terms of consumers and non-consumers of these spaces, but hopes that recent policies will have a positive impact on the number of new visitors,

*I think the way the museum is now since they've refurbished it is excellent, it's an excellent space. I think it engages a lot more with people a lot more there is a lot more hands on stuff there and I know the Conservation Centre now that has reopened makes it more alive for people I feel and hopefully it will get more people to come to it. When I was a child we were brought to the museum and that was a day out, you'd go to the museum and art galleries and I know now a lot of children in the city wouldn't even know where the museum or art gallery was. There's lots of people in the city who still haven't been to the museum or an art gallery. Hopefully now it has changed it will encourage more people to come to it. It's a great space.*  
(pc 16)

While these two previous examples tend to focus on the relationship between class and cultural capital, another respondent, this time in Hope Street Quarter, addressed the issue of class more in terms of economic and social capital. He suggested that there were certain social groups who would be inclined to visit the cultural establishments in this area, for example the Philharmonic Hall, as a kind of lifestyle statement, whereas others did not have the economic capital to do this,

*People with money will always go to the Philharmonic whether they like the concert that's on or not. Whether they like the conductor or not they'll go to the Phil because they always go to the Phil. It won't make any odds. They will be there because it's seen to be the right thing to do. You need to put things on that are free but of high quality. I mean how do you strike that balance? I mean if you put something on that is free does that diminish in people's eyes the quality of it? – "If it's free it mustn't be much good". There's that edge to it.* (pc 16)

The respondent claims that lack of economic capital is certainly a factor which prevents people from lower socio-economic groups from engaging with cultural activity in this area, but there is also a suggestion that social and cultural capital play their part too.

### **9.3.2 Consumerism**

While the respondent above touches on the notion that consumption takes place within an economic framework, the ideology of consumerism was referred to more explicitly

by other respondents. One resident in the Retail Quarter disagreed with the way in which this area was being designed to attract more affluent consumer groups,

*I have heard a lot of local people complaining about it, like getting the Met Quarter which are shops that nobody can really afford, so maybe bringing some more affordable shops would be a better idea. (pc 29)*

On the other hand, another resident was in favour of developing this designer market,

*There's not enough designer shops. (pc 14)*

Interestingly, this respondent was unemployed and from a working class background. Therefore it could be suggested that low socio-economic status acting as a barrier to consumption of this space is not necessarily applicable in all cases. This also raises interesting issues regarding the relationship between socio-economic status and the appropriation of certain consumer brands and the images associated with them.

Similar issues were also raised by place consumers at the Waterfront. Some were concerned about the commercial aspect of the Albert Dock, for example,

*It would be handy to have somewhere to eat round the docks that isn't really expensive because if we want to eat we're going to have to go back into town or spend a fortune. (pc 44)*

While this respondent liked visiting the site and some of its attractions, the price of the restaurants meant she could not afford to eat there. Another respondent also commented on the pressure to spend money at the Albert Dock, however he was not as concerned by this since he just wanted to take in the surroundings,

*As a place it's OK but it's mostly commercialised. They just want people to get here and spend money. I suppose that's everywhere. You don't have to, I just walk round thinking. I've got a parking ticket for another hour so I'll probably have a bit more of a wander round. (pc 21)*

### **9.3.3 Place Image**

Finally, it is also evident that place image played a role in empowering or preventing place consumers from engaging with certain spaces. For this visitor, Liverpool's image, endorsed by the media and marketing organisations, as The Beatles' City, was clearly persuasive in bringing her to the Cavern Quarter,

*We want to visit Liverpool because of the Beatles. (pc 10)*

On the other hand, while this resident, who incidentally was in this location just to meet up with a friend, recognises the importance of The Beatles in relation to her surroundings, she emphasises that her own musical taste is testament to possible alternative readings of this area,

*I mean there's a lot of emphasis on The Beatles, obviously we're in Mathew Street, but there's a lot more to Liverpool than just The Beatles. You know it's good to have that but there were so many other bands apart from The Beatles. I mean I used to like Rory Storm and the Hurricanes and Gerry and the Pacemakers and all that (pc 1)*

Another local respondent, comments on how he himself consumes the cultural elements of this area, but that other potential place consumers are excluded not so much due to socio-economic factors as through ignorance of the existence of what is available,

*There's quite a lot of theatres and things which is good. I think people forget about that. I'm going tonight actually. I'm going to see Jimmy Carr at the Philharmonic; that should be good. I've not been to the Unity Theatre though, that's quite a small venue, or Everyman for that matter. That's the thing about the city, you don't utilise all the things that are here. I mean one good thing is the tower of the cathedral, you see a totally different perspective of the city and on a day like this, that's a good thing to do. There's lots of little things like that and I think people who live in the city never get to experience them or don't even know they exist, which is a shame so perhaps more should be done in terms of publicity, maybe via the libraries or the internet. I think the City Council website is a little bit poor. (pc 25)*

#### **9.3.4. Summary**

Various ideologies were found to impact upon how respondents interpreted culture and in turn how they responded to certain cultural elements of the urban tourist landscape. Respondents sometimes defined culture in relation to social class. Such notions of culture were mostly related to place consumers' use of the Cultural Quarter and Hope Street Quarter, where the more traditional cultural establishments of the city such as museums, galleries and theatres are located. Respondents also addressed the concepts of culture and social class in terms of economic capital. These concepts were often associated with consumerism and how it affected place consumers' consumption patterns. Finally, the image of Liverpool, and particularly how the city is marketed as a cultural place, seemed to have a bearing on which aspects were consumed.

## 9.4 Physical Infrastructure

In addition to the social aspects discussed above, the physical structure of the landscape was also significant in empowering or restricting place consumers.

### 9.4.1 Variety of Facilities

Firstly, the variety of facilities was an issue which was addressed, in particular in connection with the Retail Quarter. For some respondents, shopping just didn't appeal as a way of passing time,

*I'll come down to the Albert Dock but I don't go into town because it's just shops and I don't like going round the shops. It's not my cup of tea. (pc 42)*

*I don't like town centres and it's for the shoppers and that's what I hate. It's got nothing that offers me.....well I might come in to go to a museum or something or an art gallery but I wouldn't dream of coming into the actual town centre on a Saturday. (pc 73)*

Both the above respondents avoided the retail area and preferred other areas because they offered them a different kind of experience. One visitor remarked that it was difficult to bring children to the shops,

*Is there anything much for children to do because we've often thought that we would come over with the children but we normally go shopping; children and shopping don't normally go together? (pc 15)*

Other respondents, however, commented on how staging events in the Retail Quarter added a new dimension to the space,

*Yes, and obviously as long as they're managed properly and controlled by security and everything then, yes, go for it. We've said quite a few times there's not that much out there for youngsters and teenagers and then they wonder why they get into trouble and there's crime and everything and I think we need more events like this to keep them entertained and to keep them off the streets. (pc 61)*

This respondent highlighted the relationship between youngsters' lack of engagement in cultural activity and the level of anti-social behaviour among this group. She believed that this particular event also provided an opportunity for youngsters, who may not otherwise do so, to engage with this space in a positive way.

### **9.4.2 Access**

In addition to the kind of facilities that were available, respondents also commented on the question of access. A local resident was concerned about physical access for the elderly and also the disabled in this area,

*I always thought that the pedestrianisation was a great idea but I think it's very difficult for older people and less able people. I think it's quite a distance to get to buses or taxis. They could maybe have right in the middle of Church Street a taxi service. (pc 6)*

The issue of disabled access at the Waterfront was a concern for this respondent as well, who also felt that the lack of foreign language provision restricted international visitors' access to certain establishments and facilities,

*There are quite a few places that aren't disabled friendly and the Tate isn't as tourist friendly as it could be because of a lack of signs. It's all in English basically and I think it is true of a few places. So yes, I think that could be improved. (pc 29)*

Since the Waterfront is an area very popular with visitors, it is a shame that international visitors' appreciation of its features and attractions is limited in this way.

### **9.4.3 Regulation of Space**

Finally, a young male resident felt strongly about the regulation of space at the Waterfront. Below he describes how he cannot spend his time how he likes because this once public space is being developed. Consequently, there are not many places where people can just sit,

*More places to just chill out like down at the Pier. It used to be dead nice there but now something's happened with all the grass and it's gone all weird and soily, so you can't sit there no more. You can't just sit down and do nothing. (pc 84)*

He feels that more 'free' public space is needed in the city centre as a whole.

### **9.4.4 Summary**

Analysis of respondents' comments indicates that the physical infrastructure of the urban tourist landscape both enables and restricts consumption. Respondents felt that the variety of facilities, especially in the Retail Quarter, could be improved. Also, it was suggested that there were problems of access, especially for the elderly and disabled, but also for international visitors. Finally, the regulation of outdoor space was believed



to discourage place consumers who wanted to spend time in an open space without engaging in any activity in particular.

## **9.5 Temporal Factors**

The final set of factors found to impact upon respondents' consumption of culture within the urban tourist landscape were related to the time and weather.

### **9.5.1 Time**

One resident described how she avoided the Cavern Quarter at certain times, although she liked spending time there,

*Mathew Street is quite good. I wouldn't recommend it on a Friday or Saturday night because it's a bit too crazy for me. I prefer it when it's more relaxed. (pc 91)*

Also, an elderly resident describes how temporal factors affect her consumption of the Cultural Quarter,

*We've done all that when we were young. We went to the Playhouse, the Phil, the Royal Court but now it's too much of an effort in the evening and there's no public transport. We don't drive so we've got to get taxis which are quite expensive. (pc 22)*

While she and her friend used to visit the theatre when they were younger, lack of public transport in the evening and the cost of taxis prevent them from visiting in the evening.

Furthermore, opening times of facilities within the city centre were sometimes thought not to be very convenient, as one resident explained,

*They could have the shops open later. I know they're going to try that. Do like late night shopping. Is it on a Thursday, is it? They might as well do it all week.....most people work 9 to 5 well, maybe not most people but a lot of people. I sometimes finish at 4, and even then it's horrible trying to rush into town if you need to get something and you know the shops are closing at half 5, it puts you off coming but if you know they're open till 9 o'clock there wouldn't be no rush, would there? (pc 3)*

### **9.5.2 Weather**

Not surprisingly, the weather was perceived to be a deciding factor in whether place consumers visited certain areas. This was especially true at the Waterfront, where when the weather was good, people quite spontaneously came to consume the site,

*I've just been the gym and thought I'll come down while it's nice. (pc 32)*

*I've just finished work so I've just come and I'm getting a bit of sun. (pc 33)*

However, when the weather isn't so good, it is clearly not so appealing. This resident explained that he visited quite regularly,

*...at least once a week, especially in this weather. I don't bother in the winter because it's too cold. (pc 30)*

### **9.5.3 Summary**

It is clear from the findings that place consumers' decision to visit certain areas of the city centre is dependent on the time of day or week. This is often in conjunction with other factors such as the number of people present or accessibility. It is also evident that the weather has a bearing on the number of people consuming certain spaces, in particular the Waterfront, and the way in which these spaces are consumed. Respondents' consumption patterns tended to be more spontaneous when the weather was good.

## **9.6 Discussion**

Issues of power have formed a focal point within consumer theory, in particular demonstrating how consumer society can be both enabling and restrictive (Miles, 1998a; 1998b; Miles and Paddison, 1998). The above analysis has shown that power is at play in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, including some, while excluding others. However, this power is enacted in dialogue between the producers and consumers of the landscape; therefore, it seems that "hegemony entangled in discourses and social practices is maintained by consent and coercion, rather than purely by domination." (Ateljevic, 2000:376). Thus, power relations are dynamic but are also more complex than suggested by writers such as Foucault (1980). There is not one dominant force 'ruling' each location and its interpretation. Different groups and individuals interact and, through their behaviour and reactions, influence the consumption patterns of other consumers and contest established social structures and meanings. Thus, place consumers become the omnipotent producers of the urban tourist landscape. Even

those who may be seen as disadvantaged and excluded such as the drunks who sit in St. John's Gardens, are in a sense in a position of power in that their presence communicates to other place consumers and shapes the space which they are in. Power, therefore, is fluid and works on many levels.

Moreover, it should be emphasised here that the relationship between power and consumption is not connected exclusively to an economic framework. The findings above have indicated that social and cultural capital also have a bearing on consumption patterns within the urban tourist landscape. Respondents discussed the significance of economic, cultural and social capital for the consumption of culture. It appears from their responses that lack of economic, cultural and social capital still play a role in preventing some people from engaging with culture. However, it seems that, as has been argued by Longhurst (2007) and van Eijck (2000), the links between class and culture are becoming more fluid. Respondents' comments indicated that socio-cultural boundaries can be transgressed, with place consumers appropriating aspects of culture, conventionally prescribed for those from other social groups. This again highlights the agency of place consumers in constructing their own experience and in turn strengthens the argument for the interplay of structure and agency, as opposed to the prominence of one over the other.

However, an emphasis on socio-cultural factors alone risks overlooking the importance of other factors. Physical factors such as transport infrastructure and physical access for the elderly and disabled, for example, as well as temporal factors such as the weather or time of day, have just as crucial an impact on whether culture in the urban landscape is consumed or not. Furthermore, it becomes apparent from the findings that quite often a combination of factors such as the time of day and the social profile of the location affects the consumption of certain spaces. Therefore, the political dimensions of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape in this sense are quite complex.

The above analysis indicates the political factors that are present in the consumption of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. These factors are in fact social, cultural, economic and physical structures through which power flows. What is interesting about the political element of these features is that it can be intentional but also incidental and either overt or covert. For example, the behaviour of the 'yobbos and scallies' who intentionally try to intimidate people can be characterised as overt. Then there are the more institutionalised forms of power such as government, planning, the media, tourist

boards and their strategies, which can be considered as covert because they are not necessarily visibly present within the landscape, but all have an agenda to shape the consumption of the urban landscape in some way. These institutionalised forces can also act unintentionally in the sense that by enforcing strategies to encourage the use of space by certain social groups, they may also exclude others. There are also unintentional coercive forces such as those imposed by the drunks, who may not intentionally provoke apprehension but do so anyway. These nuances of power, and the interplay of structure and agency which they represent, however, have not been explicitly related to the consumption of culture within the urban tourist landscape.

## **9.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has built on findings from the previous chapter concerning what motivates place consumers to engage with a specific location or activity within the urban tourist landscape. In particular, it highlights how factors exist which attract place consumers but that there are also those which limit consumption. Yet, these limiting factors have not to date been given sufficient attention within the urban tourism literature. In addition, analysis of the data has shown that these factors can be understood as political forces. However, these are not exclusively related to the capitalist framework which much consumer theory has focused on. At any one time different social, cultural, economic, physical and temporal forces act together, constantly defining and re-defining aspects of the landscape. The key factors can be summarised as follows:

- Social profiles
  - Social groups
  - Social behaviour
  - Social density
- Ideological factors
  - Socio-economic status
  - Consumerism
  - Place image
- Physical infrastructure
  - Variety of facilities
  - Access
  - Regulation of space
- Temporal factors
  - Time
  - Weather

These coercive forces can be both intentional and unintentional, and overt or covert. Moreover, power relationships appear to connect structure and agency within the urban tourist landscape. While traditionally structure has been considered as a fixed entity

and somewhat separate from the agents working within it, the data suggest that structure, is in fact rather fluid and both defines and is defined by internal and external actors.

Furthermore, although there appear to be common factors which influence all of the sample locations, certain factors seem to be more prevalent in specific locations and different locations seem to have appeal to some extent for different social groups. The city centre, on the whole, appealed to certain social groups more than others. In particular, Liverpool's city centre has appeal for young professionals with no children. Nonetheless, it is not always the case that the people who spend no time or little time in the city centre do not want to, but that their personal circumstances and lack of provision for these means that they cannot. Therefore, while Liverpool's urban landscape can be considered as the embodiment of the culture of the city, it should be understood that this representation is selective. The following chapter will demonstrate in more detail how these images and identities are constructed through the consumption of various cultural elements within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape.

## **10. Images and Identities within the Urban Tourist Landscape**

### **10.1 Introduction**

While urban environments have been considered primarily as landscapes of exclusion by writers such as Sibley (1995), it would be somewhat short-sighted not to take into account how people interact with the urban landscape in a more positive way. As Sibley points out, the “study of exclusion...is necessarily concerned with inclusion” (1995: xv). The previous chapter mostly gives examples of how the spatial and social distribution of power can have a marginalising effect on certain groups and individuals. However, the data which I am about to present here indicates how, through consumption of the cultural elements of Liverpool’s urban landscape, people are able to construct their own identities. Thus, here again, I address the aim of this thesis to examine how place consumers interpret the urban tourist landscape in relation to its physical and social features but also in relation to their own personal agendas and characteristics.

The following analysis goes to demonstrate how the urban landscape is not just a space where cultural products, in the narrower sense, such as art, music, theatre and so on are consumed; it also represents a stage where a series of informal ‘social cultures’ are played out and images and identities are challenged and produced. In this sense, the city centre can be considered as an ‘open living museum’ where visitors are active in the creation of the exhibits. Sometimes they *are* the exhibits and so in this way they are involved in a process of self re-creation.

Analysis of place consumers’ comments indicated that the concept of identity was extremely salient to their experience of the city centre. Respondents spoke of identity mainly in two senses. First of all, they discussed identity in terms of certain practices which they engaged in. Respondents related these practices to various roles they equated themselves with in their interaction with the city space. For example, participants addressed their status as resident or visitor, and in doing so often challenged perceptions of these constructs as encompassing exclusive identities and roles. Sometimes place consumers took on different roles simultaneously and other times the different roles they adopted were related to different experiences or parts of experiences, which were separated in time. The second way in which respondents approached the issue of identity was in terms of their relationship with the identity of

the city, how they understood this and to what extent they related to it on a personal level. For example, some respondents identified with some locations in the city more than others or with particular aspects of its culture such as music.

## **10.2 Performing Roles**

It was found that individuals adopted a variety of roles and identities while interacting with Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. The roles that they took on were usually defined by the practices they engaged in. Respondents' comments also demonstrated that roles are not fixed and that place consumers can enact a number of roles simultaneously or at different times. The following examples specify some of the different roles which place consumers performed.

### **10.2.1 The Tourist / Visitor**

Evidently, the roles of 'the tourist' and of 'the visitor' were not considered to be synonymous. The difference was expressed according to certain practices by the following two respondents, who had lived in Liverpool at some point and had also been born there,

*We have got friends and family in the area but we decided to do the proper tourist thing and stay in a hotel. (pc12)*

*When I come here I never come here as a tourist. Every time I come it's to visit family. That's why we come back; we love it. (pc 63)*

While their connections with the city could define them both as visitors rather than tourists, the first respondent indicates that we can choose to be tourists or not through conscious actions. Therefore, tourist identity is in some way self-defined and constitutes a subjective state.

### **10.2.2 The Tourist / Tour Guide**

The self-defined tourist introduced above takes on different roles in consuming the urban landscape. Firstly she is a tourist, revisiting her home town and reliving it as a 'tourist',

*Although we have both been to Anfield to watch games before, we have never done the tourist thing and gone through the museum and everything so we did that. We did The Beatles Story.....although I lived through The Beatles time and used to go to the Cavern at lunch time sessions. I actually*

*saw The Beatles play their last live gig at the Cavern in '63. As I say we are very much doing the tourist thing. (pc 12)*

Her account indicates how as a tourist she visits places she used to visit as a resident but experiences them in a different way. She makes a distinction between her real lived cultural experiences as a resident and the representational display of those that she consumes as a tourist. This suggests once again that residents and tourists or visitors often consume the same spaces but their experience is often differentiated through the meaning of their practices.

Secondly, however, this respondent acts as a tour guide, showing her husband the places that made up 'her Liverpool',

*I worked at the University for a year but my husband had never been to the Philharmonic pub, he'd never been to Ye Cracke or the Pilgrim, so I have been taking him round all the places I used to go to as a student and when I worked here as well. (pc 12)*

Here we see the scripted performance of the 'official' tourist trail juxtaposed with a more independent insider's tour of the city. In this way the respondent challenges the official 'must see' list of the tourist guide books. It is her status as a former resident which allows her to retrace her own heritage trail. Therefore, knowledge is key to the practices which sometimes differentiate the resident from the tourist. Furthermore, having been born and lived in Liverpool, the respondent cannot claim to be a fully fledged tourist although she is "very much doing the tourist thing." She 'works' at being a tourist, making a conscious effort to experience the city through tourist sites and activities. However, clearly not every tourist's experience is the same. It is in part this conscious choice to take part in the tourist culture and her existing familiarity with the city which differentiates her experience from that of other tourists.

### **10.2.3 The Resident / Tour Guide**

Similarly, actual local residents' experience was diversified through the different roles they enacted. Some residents explained how their experience differed from the everyday when they were acting as hosts,

*Well this lady's never been so she doesn't know Liverpool properly so I'm just trying to show her some of the nicer parts.....I'm going to take her to the museum because she's never seen that obviously and I haven't been since I was a little boy, so we're going to go in there. (pc 17)*



However, although the resident is acting as a guide, the difference between resident and visitor is reduced as both the respondent and the lady accompanying him engage in the same practice, and for both, visiting the museum represents an experience detached from the everyday.

Similarly, other residents also tended to only visit certain parts of the city centre if they were accompanied by visitors to the city,

*It's just the shops really. I don't really go.....obviously because you live here you know what's out and about. If we have friends down then we'll take them down the Albert Dock and sort of like the touristy parts and let them see what it's about, but mainly shops....shops, shops and more shops. (pc 61)*

Another resident, who at the time of being interviewed was showing friends round the city, suggested that not only was he trying to create a good impression of the city but also of himself. Normally, in contrast, he explained,

*I mooch, go along the back streets, in my scruff. (pc 81)*

While many residents tended to take visitors to the more standard tourist attractions, and only tended to go to them with visitors, one respondent claimed,

*You always find something new. (pc 65)*

At the time he was wandering round the Cavern Quarter alone. However, it was not The Beatles attractions which interested him since he was keen to unveil the lesser known heritage of the city,

*....if you look at these high buildings and you look at the tops, nobody ever looks, but some of the artwork around the building is brilliant. Very very good. If you go, you know the ventilation shaft for the Mersey Tunnel, well, people don't notice, but they're all decorated with Egyptian figures and that was when they were built in 1934. It was the time of the Egyptian craze. Howard Carter had just opened up Tutankhamen's tomb, just before that Egyptology was the craze, so that's why those buildings are decorated with Egyptian motifs.....So there you are, there's a lot of information for you, free of charge. (pc 65)*

Through imparting this information, the participant underwent a transformation from a resident passing his time looking around the city centre, to a tour guide. By the end of the interview he had presented me with a series of detailed and lengthy narratives, thus challenging more official and commercialised versions of the city's heritage.

#### **10.2.4 The Resident / Visitor**

While respondents living in the local area defined themselves primarily as residents, they compared their consumption of the urban tourist landscape with that of visitors to Liverpool. Like visitors to the city, residents engaged with visitor attractions, however, to varying extents.

One resident did not specifically attend visitor attractions in the city centre although she engaged in activities similar to some visitors,

*I do like the idea that if I got a day off I would go to Tate and have a look round and I would go to the museums, but not on a regular basis. I would if I had the time, I definitely would.....but when you're wrapped up in your own little world, you don't think, "Oh I want to go and have a look at the cathedral again" But I do see plays and I go to gigs and stuff like that, so I suppose that would fit into the tourist thing as well. (pc 60)*

Another resident, on the other hand, explained how at times she was almost a tourist in her own city,

*I like the museums and I used to go to the theatre a lot. We always seem to go over to Birkenhead on the ferry and things like that and we go along the waterfront there. Those are nice places to go especially when the weather is nice. I don't go on foreign holidays and things like that, so to me that's my holiday. That's what I do. I think it's quite a nice place anyway. (pc 75)*

These accounts are exemplary of the erosion of the boundary between tourist spaces and everyday life and between the identity of the resident and the tourist.

Other respondents addressed issues such as the authenticity of the visitor experience,

*Coming over for the weekend, you only got a bite-size view of what it was like. You normally just went on the lash with all of your mates, all the lads, and you only ever seen the pubs. You never dug into what else it had to offer because you don't have time, but ever since I've been a student I've seen all these places, so if my friends were coming over to Liverpool, people I know, I would definitely tell them about places, point them where to go. (pc 75)*

*I've been on the trip around the city on the bus from St. George's Hall. I've been into St. George's hall, with my job, with a party we took in there last year. There was a little history thing going on so I was part of that and there were a few trips. It was amusing because I thought, "Well I know all these places, this is obviously for tourists because I know Liverpool, the real Liverpool", but it was still quite interesting. (pc 8)*

While both of these respondents had engaged in touristic practice in the city, they distinguished themselves from tourists in terms of the knowledge they had acquired of the city as local residents. Once again this highlights the significance of knowledge in the consumption of place.

### **10.2.5 The Worker / Visitor**

Until this point in the findings, the identity of the visitor has been associated with leisure time. However, the experience of some participants indicated that the visitor is not necessarily engaged in a leisure role,

*We're rehearsing for a show called Bollywood Steps which is being performed outside the cathedral, so we're rehearsing and just sorting out rigging and lights and stuff like that.....I've been here before; I haven't been here on a holiday situation; it's always been work, but I like it; it's nice.....I think the building's amazing, I've never seen anything like this before.*  
(pc 58)

While this respondent defines his role as work, he is simultaneously enacting the role of a visitor, 'gazing' and interacting with his surroundings. He is there to perform for visitors, but he is also a visitor himself.

### **10.2.6 Personal Identity Roles**

In addition to the roles of resident, visitor and so on discussed above, place consumers also enacted other roles relating to their personal identities. For example, the following extract demonstrates how gender roles are performed in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape,

*Myself and my two friends are here for like a boys weekend. Don't take that in the wrong sense. We haven't really seen the city and we're just here to enjoy it. We've come up from the Midlands and Northamptonshire, a few drinks, sightseeing, etcetera.* (pc 13)

On the other hand, this visitor indicates how as a mother she tries to create a family space in the city,

*We've got the Empire booked for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, so I'm taking my daughter and her friend. So we'll definitely be coming back for that and the new space place, I heard it on the radio the advert for that one, you can go on the ferry and because it's based on space it's something that you can take all age groups. We've got a boy and a girl so a ferry up the Mersey and off to the space place would be something that would suit all of us you*

*see. It's a matter of trying to find things, especially as a family that we can do together and all enjoy. (pc 69)*

In this next example, the respondent enacts his former professional identity through his leisure activity,

*Yes, I go to the museums. I go to the Maritime Museum, being an ex-sailor and I know a lot of people in there. In fact I'm in the International Guild of Knot Tiers. (pc 52)*

The consumption of this particular cultural space in this case provides a forum, not for cultural distinction but for the assimilation of common identities.

### **10.2.7 Summary**

So far, it has been established that identity is inextricably linked to the roles played in the consumption of culture in the urban tourist landscape. The role of the resident/visitor/tourist is often a self-defined construct created in the consciousness of the individual. While there are certain practices which are specifically associated with these roles, some practices are subconsciously shared among these different groups, or even intentionally adopted in order to create a new identity. Therefore, the place consumer is the author of his/her own identity which has no fixed boundaries. Furthermore, various roles can be enacted simultaneously, therefore place consumers take on a number of identities, not only relating to their resident or visitor status but also based on other social and cultural characteristics.

## **10.3 Relationships of Space and Identity**

In addition to being defined through practising roles, place consumers' identities were also constructed through their cognitive relationship with different spaces and their identities.

### **10.3.1 Liverpoolian Identities**

The notion of the Liverpoolian identity and what constitutes a marker of resident status also formed an interesting point of discussion for place consumers.

#### *Language and Class Stereotypes*

Language, and the Liverpool accent in particular, was mentioned in relation to identity. A couple visiting Liverpool, but originally from the local area commented,

*(Respondent 1) When I got to my teens the Liverpool accent arrived in Formby and ten years later, by the time I was 30, it was quite prominent and now it has gone past Southport and it's just carrying on. It's just like a wave rippling in a pond. It is amazing how it is spreading.*

*(Respondent 2) When we come back to Liverpool, people ask where are we from and yet at home in Cumbria I don't think our accent is particularly strong but they think there is a twang. Occasionally they pick up on it and ask where we're from originally.*

*(Respondent 1) We come back here and people think, "You're a bit posh!"*  
(pc 12)

These comments indicate how the Liverpudlian identity is still generally associated with a working class culture by residents as well as people from outside the city. In this case, the Liverpool accent is a marker of class just as much as of origin. The less strong the accent, the more 'posh' someone becomes. There is also a suggestion that there is not just one Liverpudlian identity but that identity is also relative and subjective. Finally, the respondents' remarks indicate that the geographical boundaries of the city are merely representational and can be redrawn in socio-cultural terms.

Many respondents were proud of coming from Liverpool and while some identified very strongly with the city, they challenged the stereotypical view of the 'Scouser'. They indicated that not all Liverpudlians are the same and tried to differentiate themselves from the less desirable image of the Scouser. The following resident refers to the socially constructed stereotype of a Liverpudlian, and while he implies that there is an element of reality in this image, he sets himself apart from it,

*...there is a reputation there of, you know, "They're rough," and you have your Liverpool jokes, you know, "Don't leave your car there, it'll get robbed", but I think that is just a small part of it and obviously I wouldn't associate myself with that but then other parts of Liverpool, yes. (pc 61)*

Some local residents, however, did not identify themselves as Scousers although they lived in the local area and had a local accent,

*I talk to people online and they ask if I'm a Scouser but I'm not, I might sound a bit like one. (pc 21)*

Incidentally, the above respondent lived on the Wirral, which as discussed in earlier chapters is separated from Liverpool by the River Mersey, although it is part of the local Merseyside area. He distinguishes himself from Scousers in a geographical sense, but also implicitly in a socio-cultural sense since he probably does not wish to be associated with the stereotypical 'Scouser'. Here, identity is defined by how the

individual perceives him/herself rather than how he/she is perceived. However, inherent in this self-definition is a sense of how the individual *wants* to be perceived by others. Furthermore, rather than achieving cultural distinction through the consumption of cultural products, here it is given through accent and class stereotypes.

### *Geographical Boundaries*

Geography is clearly a significant factor in identity construction, and the River Mersey in particular represents a well-defined boundary in relation to how local residents relate to the culture of Liverpool. The extract below indicates how a Wirral resident does not now feel part of Liverpool although he grew up in the city,

*Not really. I think about it a lot, when we were kids, getting up to all kinds.*  
(pc 55)

However, this does not imply that identities are fixed. This respondent still identifies with Liverpool in an imaginary sense from his experience as a child, however, he feels detached from the city in a physical sense now that he lives on the Wirral.

It seems that claims to local identity are relative and subjective as indicated by the following,

*I don't feel detached because I work in the city and we've always come out for nights out in Liverpool. I don't feel segregated.* (pc 77)

Another respondent also defined his identity in terms of a sense of belonging but in a different way. He referred to how he related to the city through his family origins rather than a connection with the place itself. In this sense, he expresses a kind of kinship with the city,

*I've travelled all around England with work so I think Liverpool says to me family because I'm generally outside it all. I think it means family because it's about coming home.* (pc 28)

For another resident, too, it was the general affinity for the place she calls 'home' which she identified with,

*I've always liked Liverpool. You know it's like my home now and I've always liked Liverpool. And I have a lot of friends here, you know, that we all came here to Liverpool when we were very young, like 17 and 18, so we did our growing up in Liverpool, away from your Dad, you know. So yes, we did our growing up in Liverpool. And even though....I've got a friend lives down in South Wales now and even, it doesn't matter where they are, they all have*

*this affinity for Liverpool because this is where we did our growing up.  
(pc 2)*

However, for this elderly resident it is a particular emotional bond that she has developed through sharing a similar transitional period in moving to Liverpool in her youth and which has provided the basis for common experiences and friendships which she most identifies with. She also explains how this bond is not fixed in space since even those friends who have moved away again still identify with the city.

### *Local Cultural Characteristics*

The cultural heritage of the city is another aspect of local identity which was referred to by residents. It is seen as something to be proud of and is often residents' way of discounting the negative stereotypes frequently associated with Liverpudlians,

*Oh yes you have got to know where you come from and what your city is about. It's like knowing who you are, knowing about your culture because when someone says something wrong you can correct them. (pc 34)*

This respondent considers the local identity an integral part of her own cultural identity.

However, other residents were more specific in their identification with the cultural heritage of the city,

*In terms of I try to take part in the music I suppose I can relate to the musical heritage we've got. I enjoy playing and I enjoy the music from that time. I suppose in my own little way I'm adding to a small sector of that culture just through living and taking part. (pc 9)*

This resident, a member of a local band, explains how the musical heritage of the city becomes part of his own identity as he engages with it, and in turn how he becomes part of the musical heritage by reproducing it. In contrast, the following resident disregards some of the more traditional elements of the city's cultural identity but identifies himself with the friendly, warm characteristics associated with Liverpool people,

*I can relate to some of it but I'm not a big fan of football and not a fan of the Liverpool music scene, like. I'm not into The Beatles and stuff like that but I can relate to the people and people being nice to you, like I'm not a horrible person to people I don't know. (pc 84)*

Nevertheless, it was not only residents originally from the local area who felt a connection with the city. Residents who had moved to the city from somewhere else

often had an affinity for the city and felt part of it. In a similar vein to those whose origins were in Liverpool, residents who had moved to the city later in life also identified with the culture of Liverpool,

*I think there's the music side of it, you know, I listened to The Beatles when I was a kid, my parents liked The Beatles, and so it's interesting to work in the city that's the birthplace of The Beatles. I'd say that's one of the strongest ones really. Football as well, I am a football fan. I like football, I watch football, so there's that aspect of it as well. (pc 78)*

Another resident related to the more contemporary culture of the city but also the friendliness of the people,

*I suppose for me it's been a really welcoming place. I don't know if it's depressing or touching but people are really surprised that you've moved up, like, "What are you doing coming to live here?" And that's a bit of a shame really because I think the city's got so much to offer. I found it easy to relate to because there's a lot of things happening that I'm interested in and it's got some of the best cinema spaces that I've ever been to. (pc 92)*

Interestingly she shuns the self-deprecating attitude of other residents towards the city, indicating that she identifies with the city in a positive way.

Other residents justified their connection with the people of Liverpool through a comparison with people in other areas,

*I'm a Southern person so I will be moving back down south. I lived in Manchester as well for three years and comparing the two, I'd rather be in Liverpool. The people are very nice, very friendly, usually very helpful as well. Whereas in London it's, "No, I haven't got time to speak to you, go on." (pc 44)*

In contrast to the extract above, the following quotes indicate how residents found commonalities between Liverpool culture and that of their place of origin,

*Yes, I can [identify with the city] because when people in Liverpool love you, they give you their heart and West Ham people are the same, Cockneys are the same, they'll give you their heart, they'll give you anything, no problem there. (pc 52)*

*Yes, it's very similar to the culture in Newcastle. The town itself is similar, the mentality of the people is quite similar, the history is very similar and the sense of humour, that sort of thing. (pc73)*



In a similar way to residents, visitors also found they could relate to elements of Liverpool culture. This visitor identifies with Liverpool through local people he has known and stories they have told and especially their humour,

*The Scouse comedians though, it's part and pie. In fact everyone I used to work with thought they were a comedian. Sometimes they weren't but....It's like a lot of areas because obviously in Liverpool there's a lot of Irish influence because of the work. When you get that mixture you're going to get comedians....I like a comedian who stands up and talks about where he lives and makes it funny. You've got to have a bond with the place to understand that. (pc 62)*

Similarly, this respondents' connection with the city began even before he arrived. It was his identification with the musical heritage in particular which influenced his decision to visit,

*I've never been to Liverpool before and it's a city that I've always been attracted to for many reasons but mainly because of the music. (pc 39)*

For many visitors, there is something familiar about Liverpool culture. This visitor, originally from Liverpool feels a strong connection with Liverpool and with its people. Although he does not have a local accent, a significant aspect of local culture and identity, he still feels that Liverpool is his home,

*I suppose I'd consider it home but being away for so long I haven't got a Liverpool accent or anything like that.....I suppose Liverpool people will welcome anybody even if you don't sound like a Scouser. That's the way it feels anyway.....I suppose it's that sort of thing and in Dublin, they're very similar to Scousers and when I meet older people they always remind me of my nan and things like that, you know. So I kind of relate to that and straight away when I meet a Liverpool person it's kind of you know the person, you get the sense of the person, who they are. (pc 63)*

### **10.3.2 Location Identities**

Above it was established that respondents did not necessarily identify with every aspect of the city or its culture as a whole. Further exploration of respondents' relationship with the city indicated that there were certain parts of the city which they had a particular affinity with. This relationship was characterised through people / social identities, music, personal narratives or contested identities.

## *Social Identities and Music*

When talking about parts of the city which they identified with, respondents very often related this to their visiting the city centre in the evening. Like the following residents, many tended to prefer going to a particular part of the city centre,

*...there's a number of choices of the kind of place that you can go. You can go to the docks and hang round with people who've got money but aren't very interesting or you can go to Mathew Street, which is quite fun sometimes, but it's a little bit rough and it's not my kind of scene really, or you can go to Concert Square which is a bit too rowdy for me really, or you can go to this end of town which has got....I like the music that they tend to play round there and all my friends seem to go to bars around that area. It's really strange how the city's kind of chopped up into different kinds of bars and clubs. (pc 60)*

*Everyone I know goes. It's funny going out because different types of people still go to different parts of town, Concert Square for example, but I guess it's the old student haunts that I go to. (pc 5)*

Their comments suggest that the identity of specific locations is socially and culturally constructed. In particular it seems to be about the kind of person you are and the type of music you like. For the following respondent, experience of the city centre at night is very much associated with taste in music and the ambiance which is created through the music,

*It's more sort of my style, my kind of music. It might be before I was born but it's what I took reference to really. I like the atmosphere with live bands. I prefer live music than going to clubs. (pc 9)*

For others, experience of the city in the evening is particularly dependent on the people who you socialise with. It is thus a social activity,

*It depends who you mix with and what entertainment you like and where you like to drink. If you mix with different people you might experience different things. (pc 25)*

On the whole, it seemed that socio-cultural distinction was particularly evident in the consumption of the evening economy. However, participants did not appear particularly concerned with presenting a particular image of themselves but rather with frequenting places where they could enjoy certain genres of music and socialise with people similar to them in some way.

However, it was not only through the evening economy that people related to specific parts of the city as indicated here below,

*I think you find areas where you feel you belong. As I said my family is first generation living in the city, my family's originally from the Isle of Man but coming down here I feel a sense of belonging more than other parts of the city. (pc 67)*

While residents were quite clear about which parts of the city they visited, visitors to the city did not generally emphasise any areas in the city centre which they identified with in particular. Again this could be due to the depth of knowledge of residents compared to visitors. However, not all visitors had limited knowledge of the city. For example, those who had visited before or lived in the city previously would be more familiar with the city centre. Nonetheless, visitors did have personal criteria which determined which spaces they used.

### *Contested Identities*

While certain areas of the city may be associated with a certain cultural identity, respondents did not always adhere to this cultural code in their consumption of the city centre. Through these contested narratives and identities, respondents engaged with certain spaces more than others. A busker who had recently arrived in Liverpool was discussing where he might go and play,

*Bold Street and next to this club where The Beatles played for the first time, The Cavern, it's not a very classical place, but that would be interesting. (pc 54)*

While he decides to play in areas where traditionally there are buskers, he goes against the dominant culture of the Cavern Quarter by going to play classical music there rather than the standard Beatles hits. Similarly, a young resident provided an alternative reading of the Waterfront to the predominant associations with maritime heritage,

*I used to ride my bike and skateboard down by the river but I don't really go to the Albert Dock for any other reason. For me it's not a desirable place to live or go there. It's kind of not my scene. (pc 59)*

Despite the general perception of the Waterfront as a pleasant place to visit, the respondent was not inspired by this but purely the functionality of the space as somewhere to cycle and skateboard.

## Personal Narratives

Identification with particular spaces in the city centre was not always connected to Liverpool, however. Some respondents identified with particular spaces which took them on personal imaginary journeys outside Liverpool. For example, one respondent who was in the Cavern Quarter at the time of the interview explained,

*I was just talking to a guy down there playing the bag pipes, busking. I was just talking to him about what he was doing. He was collecting money to go and visit war graves so we were talking about the war graves all over Europe. We've been around Europe quite a lot. (pc 65)*

The two men's common interest in war graves transports them out of Liverpool to Europe and contests the cultural emphasis on The Beatles.

Another respondent, a visitor to Liverpool, was not particularly familiar with the city. Being on the Waterfront she consumed the space in an imaginary sense, which took her away from Liverpool,

*I mean the Isle of Man is very much so built on the heritage of the Isle of Man and how it was brought around and I think that everywhere should be like that. They're trying to preserve the Isle of Man and all the Manx folk tales and stories that you're told as kids and I think it's nice to keep it going. When you go back you realise how much you miss it. It's like the folk tales of all the fairies that are on the Isle of Man and it's really good. I think everywhere should do that because you go back and you think, well yes, this is like the fairy bridge or whatever and over here if there was something like a folk tale for a certain area I think that should be brought up more because it's very much so a part of the Isle of Man. I like the old time stuff me. (pc 41)*

Being on the Waterfront causes her to reminisce about the Isle of Man, where she is originally from and which is the reason why she is there, to send her children over on the boat on holiday. Therefore she identifies with the significance of the space but not necessarily in relation to Liverpool culture. In Liverpool she feels a sense of longing rather than belonging.

### 10.3.3 Summary

Respondents expressed how they related to Liverpool as a whole but also to particular locations within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. Local identity was defined by respondents in terms of language, geography, popular culture, cultural heritage, a sense of belonging, and to some extent, class. Their responses indicated that place

consumers are selective in the elements of culture they identify with. Respondents generally spoke about Liverpool's culture in a positive manner, although they did sometimes mention negative aspects which they tended to disassociate themselves from.

The distinction between resident and visitor was not strictly defined. While geography was a significant factor, residents did not have to originate from the local area to be able to identify with the local culture, just as those who did originate from the area did not necessarily have a particular connection with the local culture. Visitors also often identified with Liverpool's culture. One noticeable difference, however, between locals and non-locals attitudes was their level of ownership. Those who lived in the city and especially those who originated from Liverpool expressed feelings of pride, whereas for those who lived outside the local area and particularly those who had not originally come from the city, it was more admiration that they conveyed. Still, it seems that the culture of Liverpool is not only embedded in local identities but in that of people with all kinds of connections with the city.

Furthermore, respondents defined in their own terms what their relationship with the city was and how this related to their own identity. Therefore, identity is both subjective and relative. It is defined both by how the individual or group perceives themselves and how they are perceived by others. There is a dialectical relationship between the perceived and the perceiver, whereby the one can challenge the identity of the other. Therefore image and the imagined are inextricably linked to identity. Furthermore, identities are not static but are constantly reinvented in relation to social and environmental context and experience.

Residents especially had a particular affinity with certain parts of the city. This was particularly apparent in their consumption of the evening economy, where distinction was performed in relation to musical tastes but predominantly forms of social capital. Visitors to the city did not indicate a particular attachment to certain areas of the city, possibly due to the often limited engagement with any one place. However, this would not apply in the case of those who had visited more regularly or had previously lived in the city. In addition, while certain areas tended to be associated with particular practices or narratives, the more dominant associations were often contested through respondents' alternative use and readings of space. Furthermore, identification with a

particular place was not always related to Liverpool but transported respondents on an imaginary journey elsewhere.

#### **10.4 Discussion**

The findings presented above raise a number of issues relating to place consumers' images and identities and their relationship with the urban tourist landscape. Performance, or practice, appears to be a crucial element of the experience of the urban tourist landscape. Performance is constituted by both conscious and subconscious practices through which place consumers are defined as residents, tourists or visitors. However, these roles are not imposed. Place consumers define themselves in relation to these roles by engaging in chosen practices. For instance, respondents' comments indicate that tourist identity is not simply defined by external parameters such as the distance travelled from home. Tourist identity is often self-imposed. We can see this by referring back to the extracts taken from pc 12, p. 206, where it is through the purposive actions of staying in a hotel and visiting specific sites that the respondent defines herself as a tourist. Thus, visitors can choose to be tourists or not, through the practices they engage in. They can play at being a tourist to varying degrees. Similarly, residents can become tourists through holidaying in their own city. It is their consciousness which defines them as a tourist or not. Therefore the place consumer is active in defining his/her own role and identity within the urban tourist landscape.

Furthermore, the roles that are performed are by no means fixed. There may be certain places which become designated as tourist spaces through tourism and place marketing discourses. These representations of the landscape become embedded in tourist practice, while others do not appear on the tourist map, so to speak. Nonetheless, while certain practices and places may be associated with the resident or tourist, some are transferable from one role to another, a position which has been taken by authors such as Urry (1990). For example, it is evident that some tourist sites are also used by residents' in their habitual leisure activity, as expressed in the extract from pc 60, p. 209. Therefore, especially in the urban tourist landscape, where tourism and the everyday fuse together, these roles are not strictly defined. Consequently, the role of the tourist, visitor or resident is often a self-defined construct created in the consciousness of the individual.

The results also highlighted how place consumers are able to perform multiple roles simultaneously. For example, a resident can enact the role of a resident *and* a tourist. While the majority of the time residents may perceive themselves as residents, they are able to slip in and out of the role of tourist through engaging in practices associated with tourists. However, throughout this performance they retain the identity of a resident. In a similar manner, a visitor to the city can also take on the role of a tour guide, passing on local information to other place consumers. Hence, although the transitional nature of roles has been recognised in the tourism literature, the visitor and tour guide are conceptualised as having separate identities and roles (Edensor, 2000; 2001). However, it is clear from the findings presented above that these roles can be combined.

While the performative nature of the visitor experience has been analysed by writers such as Crang (1997) and Edensor (2000; 2001), these analogies have not been related to such an extent to the urban tourist experience specifically. Perhaps it is for this reason that the convergence of certain roles and practices has been overlooked. In much of the literature to date, the visitor has been presented in a leisure role. The worker tends to be a member of the local population, while the visitor is part of the audience, albeit sometimes engaged in the performance in some way (Crang, 1997; Edensor, 2001). However, the findings of this study indicated that the visitor was often situated in a working role. Nonetheless, leisure was also sometimes part of their overall experience. The example of the visitor who is in the city to put on a dance performance (pc 58, p. 210) stands out in particular since the role of the performer, in the theatrical sense as applies here, does not seem to have previously been associated with that of a visitor. Again this highlights how in the urban tourist landscape traditional roles and identities are challenged, and the distinction between the production and consumption of culture and the everyday and the new, is reduced, perhaps more so than in other tourist locations.

The findings also suggest that the experience of the urban tourist landscape as performed through the roles of tourist, visitor, resident, tour guide, and so on is not bound by standardised practices and meanings. Therefore, performance can also be understood as an expression of "unreflexive habit" (Edensor, 2000; 2001) and a continuation of place consumers' everyday selves. The urban tourist experience is also therefore as unique as the individual. The personal identity roles which emerged indicate that individuals perform and make meaning in relation to their own socio-

cultural characteristics such as gender, age, ethnic origin, social status, sexuality, etc., but also through their own personal preferences, regardless of whether they are a visitor or a resident. If we read this from the perspective of Bourdieu (1984), we might argue that these personal preferences are influenced by social characteristics such as class, for example. Furthermore, it could be claimed that particular cultural practices are engaged in as a symbolic signifier of this social status. In other words, consumption is used intentionally as a form of social distinction. However, as has been found in other studies (Longhurst and Savage, 1996: 284), the place consumers addressed in this research did not seem so concerned with performing cultural distinction in this sense. Their consumption of the urban tourist landscape provided an opportunity to share common experiences with others similar to themselves or to explore their own identities. Therefore, here I would agree that consumption practices indicate “how commonality and solidarities are forged between people” as well as representing a form of distinction (Longhurst and Savage, 1996: 275).

The duality between the performative and non-performative elements of the urban tourist experience raises the issue of the extent to which place consumers are conscious of their own performance and therefore are intentionally addressing an audience. The results presented above, and in particular the multi-dimensional aspect of place consumers' performances, (e.g. pc 12, p. 206; pc 81, p. 208; pc 65, p. 208) suggests that the actors seem to slip in and out of different roles and therefore while there is sometimes a heightened experience, aimed at creating a specific impression, the performance can also be an extension of their everyday selves and identities. Sometimes it is clear that the performer and the audience are one and the same and therefore the performance is simply a self-reflexive statement, rather than a message intended for an external audience's consumption. Therefore, as Edensor has found (2001: 78), it appears that performance on the urban tourist landscape is “intentional and unintentional, concerned with both being and becoming, strategically and unreflexively embodied.”

Performance, as a whole, whether intentional or not, drew strongly on place consumers' knowledge. This significance of knowledge as a key component of place consumers' experience and their active construction of place and its meaning has already been established (Selby, 2004a: 150-158). It is in relation to their own knowledge of a place which place consumers form their interpretation. Interestingly, the resident or host community have traditionally been perceived as the ‘guardians of



knowledge'. However, as discussed above, visitors too, armed with local knowledge, took on the role of tour guide. This seems to be a reflection of how globalised flows of people and information are beginning to challenge the relationships between tourist and host communities, knowledge and place (Featherstone, 1990). Consequently, visitors may have acquired knowledge through previous visits, the media, contact with residents, or they may have even been residents once themselves. Equally, residents may not have in depth local knowledge if they have not always been resident in the same place. However, even residents who have lived for equal periods in a place will have different experiences and therefore varying knowledge. Therefore, people's relationships with places and identities are changing as the result of the global distribution of knowledge.

Apart from situated practice, it was discovered that place consumers' identities were constructed through their images of and relationship with space. However, possessing this identity was relative and subjective. Place consumers could embrace or reject it; others could assign or contest it. It is clear that residents' identification with the local area is much more personalised and strong local identities exist within the larger local area. The findings demonstrate that place consumers relate to different aspects of culture, such as language, which are not necessarily promoted as part of the local or cultural tourism offer. So, the cultural elements of the landscape which are actually consumed are more wide-ranging than those which are officially promoted for consumption. Therefore, residents, in particular, may not identify with local culture as represented by more generalised depictions produced by place marketing agencies, for example (Kokosalakis *et al*, 2006).

Place consumers suggested that there was a strong connection between local identity and belonging. Belonging was considered in two different senses; first of all as rooted in the physicality of the area of residence, and secondly as an imagined attachment to the culture of the place. Furthermore, in their accounts, many non-locals demonstrated how they identified with Liverpool, not through their actual or representational contact with the city, but through characteristics which were common to Liverpool and their own place of origin. This indicates that visitors and tourists are not only seeking out difference but also commonalities in their experience of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. This challenges Urry's (1990) view that tourists seek out elements of the tourist landscape which are removed from the everyday. They clearly also relate to aspects which have some level of familiarity to them.

Another interesting finding was that respondents, especially residents, were specific in the areas of the city centre which they related to. Residents spoke of the segregated nature of the city centre especially in relation to the evening economy. It was evident from their comments that the evening economy is a socio-cultural construction. Respondents didn't really mention the physicality of the venues they preferred but rather the kind of people that frequented them and the music which was played there. In this sense, place consumers are active in the construction of the urban landscape as they intentionally cast a specific environment around themselves. Here the landscape and actions of those within it can be read from an existential and phenomenological point of view as advocated by the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962), whereby meaning is constructed through how individuals perceive the world.

Further relating to this line of thought, it was evident that place consumers imposed their own identities on certain spaces through the performance of alternative cultural practices, not traditionally associated with those areas. For example, pc 54, p. 218, who aspired to play classical music in the Cavern Quarter, the area of the city most associated with popular music, or pc 59, p. 218, who used the Waterfront as a space to ride his bike and skateboard, not for more conventional practices such as gazing at the water, engaging with maritime heritage. In this way, place consumers contested the dominant cultural associations of specific places and transformed their meaning. Other place consumers, as exemplified by the excerpts from pc 65, p. 219, or pc 41, p. 219, constructed their own narratives, not by engaging in less conventional practices but in a more subtle and perhaps unconscious manner. Through connecting with places other than Liverpool through imagined narratives, they imposed personal readings on the locations where they were and completely challenged the situated meaning of place. Bagnall (1996; 2003) has emphasised the use of the imagination in interpreting specific heritage sites. The findings presented in this chapter, however, indicate the central role of the imagination in identifying with the urban tourist landscape in general.

## **10.5 Conclusion**

From the findings discussed above, we can conclude that in their consumption of the urban tourist landscape, place consumers define themselves in terms of the role of a resident, visitor or tourist. The distinction between these roles is not clearly defined since, firstly, identification with any one of them is subjective, and secondly, the

associated practices and spaces are often not specific to one role but shared among them. Through the constant re-enactment of local identity by both visitors and residents, Liverpool identity becomes a socio-cultural construction, fixed neither in space nor in meaning.

In addition to the roles of tourist, resident and so on, place consumers also subconsciously engage in other roles such as that of the tour guide, although not necessarily in a professional sense. In some cases though, place consumers are involved in working roles as well as leisure roles. The key identity roles which emerged are the following:

- The tourist / visitor
- The tourist / tour guide
- The resident / tour guide
- The resident / visitor
- The worker / visitor

Furthermore, performances are not only based on the enactment of these specialised roles but also on more personalised characteristics of the individual, thus their practices are also an extension of their everyday selves. Roles based on gender, family and profession in particular featured in respondents' comments. Despite these distinguishing characteristics it was also found that place consumers do not always use their consumption of the urban tourist landscape to perform social or cultural distinction; in fact they predominantly claimed to draw on it as a means of expressing their commonalities with others. Respondents mentioned how their identities were reflected in the city as a whole through language, social class, geography, kinship and local cultural characteristics. Furthermore, residents, in particular, mentioned how their own identities were connected to particular locations in the city through people, music, personal narratives and contested narratives. In terms of identity construction, therefore, the place consumer as performer was not speaking so much to an audience as to him/herself and thus, performance was seen as an attempt at self-affirmation or re-affirmation. In this case, the performer and audience are one; they are bound in a self-reflexive relationship. In other cases the place consumer could be considered as both performer, enacting his/her own narratives, and audience, watching and reacting to the performances of others. Seen in this light, the urban tourist landscape provides a

stage on which actors can re-enact their own identities in soliloquy, albeit in the presence of the “diffused audience” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998). The whole landscape is an open living museum, where the visitors create the exhibits, from the mundane to the extraordinary, and consequently become part of the exhibition themselves. In taking on the role of both performer and audience member, visitors and residents alike become both cultural consumers and cultural producers (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998:75). They cast their own identities on the urban tourist landscape, thus re-defining its prescribed structure and meaning and in particular the roles and identities prescribed for them through tourism discourse. In this sense, consumption of this landscape is characterised by the interplay of structure and agency.

So, this chapter has addressed the interaction of social and place identities in the consumption of culture within Liverpool’s urban tourist landscape. The next chapter will develop understanding of the experience of the urban tourist landscape by considering the physical, cognitive and emotional processes through which place consumers interpret this space.

# 11. Negotiating Liverpool's Urban Tourist Landscape

## 11.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to consider, in more specific terms, how people make sense of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. If the previous chapter considered place consumers' actions from a phenomenological point of view, in other words, *what* they perceive, this section engages with *how* they perceive the urban tourist landscape, based on a more "phenomenographic" approach (Ryan, 2000). The following results will demonstrate how the urban tourist landscape is negotiated in physical, emotive and functional terms, and how the experience of the landscape involves a process of acculturation.

## 11.2 Physical Negotiation

Responses given by the participants concerning how they engaged with various spaces in the city centre suggested that the experience of the urban tourist landscape takes place through the physical actions of place consumers which link them directly with the urban landscape. Therefore, consumption of this space can be seen as a physical experience in two senses. Firstly, in terms of the physicality of the place which people engage with and secondly, in relation to the physical actions which place consumers carry out. Not many studies seem to make the link between these two. Some focus on the physicality of the environment while others concentrate on the physical actions of those consuming it.

The significance of activity to the urban experience is highlighted by this visitor, who now lives in the countryside,

*It's not as vibrant, it's not as lively. We look out onto a field of cows. We come to the city there is a 101 choices of things to do. Back home, nice view, nice cow, what do we do? (pc 12)*

However, the following respondent indicated how not all of the urban tourist landscape is about fast-paced lifestyle but that different parts of the city centre are negotiated at different paces,

*If I want to just dawdle and have a drink in a café I'll come here. (pc 29)*

The built environment provides a series of pathways by which place consumers negotiate the urban landscape. The following quotes indicate how people consciously

devise their own map of the city using physical landmarks, chosen according to the practices and kind of experience they want to engage in,

*I'll come on a night out sometimes, go out for a drink in the evening but normally it's just to go round the shops. (pc 3)*

*I'm always in the museum either drawing or sketching. I do art so I tend to go there for inspiration. I don't really go to the galleries that much but definitely the World Museum. (pc 28)*

*The things I partake in which is I really like going to the Phil because it's so convenient because I work next door. We go there quite a bit and we go to FACT, which is a really great cinema, that's really good. I don't tend to go to many of the theatres or we don't tend to eat in the city centre. (pc 96)*

It was also evident that visitors or residents new to the city, found different ways of discovering it through various practices and means of moving through it,

*I have a few hours now so I thought I just want to have a look around again you know. It's been a number of years since I've been back so I thought I'd just have a look around. (pc 63)*

The respondent above revises his knowledge of the city by walking through it and looking round. For these Polish girls looking for summer jobs in Liverpool though, photography provides a means of learning about the city,

*We're studying photography in our country so that's why we're taking photos of people, landscapes, but mostly people. (pc 53)*

The following two respondents find different ways of viewing the whole of the city,

*Well we just came down here because we were going to go on the Duck Tour but that was all full up so we just went on the double decker bus tour. I just wanted to get a feel of the city and things and that was just a quick overview and now we know where we can come back to and look around a bit more. (pc 57)*

*Now we're going up the cathedral tower to look at Liverpool and the changes that have taken place. (pc 81)*

The above examples all suggest an emphasis on the visual, however, a resident relatively new to the city, states how he has discovered the city not only through places to visit but through food, the weather and the people,

*I've been back home two or three times and every time I go back I have many more things to share....Every time I mention something new, I say,*

*'I'm going to go there, I'm going to do that.' So I have many more things to say to my friends rather than just The Beatles or... So things like food, like the weather because I've been here already three years and I know how weird is the weather. Sometimes it changes like that. People. Now I know how people live here and the food that they eat and places that are very good to go. (pc 100)*

Other respondents added to the notion that negotiating the urban landscape could actually be a multi-sensory experience. This visitor indicates how The Cavern Club can be consumed through different senses,

*I suppose we will go to see it, have a drink, take some photos and then go to another place. (pc 10)*

Similarly, this visitor, in describing some of the highlights of his holiday, demonstrates how consumption of the urban landscape represents an embodied experience, drawing on all the senses,

*At a bar quite near here I drank a few beers and then I dared to sing a song at the Karaoke stuff, one of my favourite songs which is Up the Junction by Squeeze, great pop song, and that's not the sort of thing I would do easily in France, and then just having some rest in the late afternoon after a tough day a couple of days ago because I was looking for a hotel the whole day and couldn't find one. I was just alone near Princes Dock, lying on the bench and listening to the seagulls and watching the sun set and it was really a perfect moment. (pc 39)*

### **11.2.1 Summary**

The above findings demonstrate that it is not only the physicality of the urban landscape which produces the visitor experience, but the fusion of the landscape and the physical actions of place consumers as they come into contact with it. According to respondents' comments, the urban landscape provided a setting for a wide range of activities. While the physical components of the city centre provided a series of pathways by which place consumers could negotiate space, each place consumer devised a personal map, coloured by their own interests, needs, and mood. In addition, participants found different ways of moving through the urban landscape which again produced a variety of experiences. As respondents negotiated the city centre they drew on a whole range of senses which created an individualised, embodied experience.

### 11.3 Emotive Negotiation

From one perspective, the physicality of the urban landscape could be read in functional terms as responding to the interests and needs of place consumers. Respondents' comments did indicate that their experience and use of space was rooted in everyday needs,

*I'm just looking round really. I've got band practice later so instead of going home I might as well just stay here. (pc11)*

*I've not been here before to the shops. It's alright I suppose, there are more shops here than back home. There is no JJB or John Lewis or anything like that over there so it's quite handy to come over and have a browse...I mean it serves a purpose for us anyway... (pc15)*

Nevertheless while the functionality of elements of the city centre represented a significant part of the experience, respondents also engaged with the urban landscape on a more emotive level. This emotional attachment with the built environment was particularly evident in place consumers' reference to the physical regeneration of Liverpool city centre. This respondent expresses her feelings of pride and ownership relating to the built environment,

*It's important because this is all we've got, this is ours, it belongs to us. It's getting done and it needs it. I think it is a good thing, wonderful. (pc 32)*

However, not all respondents felt positively about the landscape. This resident felt that the developments detracted from her appreciation,

*I wouldn't say I'm impressed with the new buildings they're putting up on the waterfront though. It's spoilt the whole waterfront. And if you go to Seacombe and look across, it just really does spoil the whole waterfront. (pc 55)*

Some respondents found that the landscape did not provide them with what they really wanted and as a result they felt negatively towards certain aspects as the following excerpts demonstrate,

*Well what can you think of any city shops, they're all the same. I hope that the other lot that come to the new development bring something different that we haven't seen before. (pc 22)*

*..this is just city centre and I'm used to walking very much and I used to live in a town and it was surrounded by some woods, we had a garden so that's why I miss some things here. (pc 27)*



For other respondents, however, it was clear that the physical setting of the city centre provided a means of emotional engagement. These participants justified their consumption of certain places in terms of social activity. Socialising was their main concern and the physicality of the landscape enabled this activity,

*Mainly because my friend works in Cavern Court so I'm just going to go and see her but I just like coming here anyway if it's nice. (pc 1)*

*I eat out nearly every day because I've got lots of friends who work in the area, on Hope Street and on Rodney Street and places like that. So we usually meet up for lunch and go to Blackburne House or the Quarter or the Everyman. So this is an area that I spend a lot of time in in the day. (pc 60)*

Other respondents sought a particular sensation which parts of the urban environment created,

*I prefer it when the wind's a bit calmer because there's more reflections on the water. I've got a thing about still water and reflections. It's very calming but as you can see there aren't that many today. (pc 21)*

For some respondents the attraction of certain places was not so much related to their current function as to the associations they held for them personally. So again it was evident that their engagement was emotional and represented an embodied experience,

*And there's nothing like going back to where you really belong. I like coming back and seeing the Cathedral and I was showing him...I made my Holy Communion in 1967 and I was one of the Holy Communion children that was chosen to come and sign the book of remembrance so we got here too late and the office was closed so I couldn't look at my name in it but I also carried the candle into Our Lady's altar which was quite nice and all those memories as you get older they actually stick with you more. When you're in your 20s you're not bothered about stuff like that. Then I remember my grandad used to work on the docks so we used to go down when the ships from India came in to unload them to go to Coopers which used to be a fantastic shop which was next to C&A. The door is still there and you used to go downstairs in the basement and as you were walking down all you could smell were the fresh coffee and spices, you used to get sackfuls and tubs of peanut butter. That's it, memories of Liverpool, wet, cobbled streets; you always remember things so prettily in your head. (pc 24)*

This former resident's memory is not just of the way places looked but of how they felt physically, how they smelt and what her own lived experience of them was. She reads these places on an emotional level even though she realises these emotions do not

necessarily represent the current reality. There is a similar emotional realism in this visitor's response to the Cavern Quarter,

*I would have just gone past it because it's a pub, but it says 'John Lennon's pub' and I went down and there was nobody in down these wee steps and I knew they played in a wee pub down stairs, so I went down and there was nobody in but I seen the place where it happened and where they would have stood and sung and it still has all the old pavings on the floor. But it's locked up. There's all big beer kegs sitting about. (pc 51)*

In appearance, the building she describes is nothing special and she seems somewhat disappointed by the lack of activity there; however, it is her own imagination which brings the place to life.

### **11.3.1 Summary**

While the functionality of the urban landscape plays a major part in place consumers' experiences, there was also a strong emotional element which came to light when they discussed their experiences in more detail. Changes to the physical structure of the urban environment could either enhance or detract from respondents' appreciation of them. Furthermore, it was also evident from this that the urban landscape was not always associated with positive emotions. The importance of the physicality of the urban landscape was played down through participants' emphasis on the emotional element of their experiences. The opportunity to socialise was one aspect of this. However, reminiscence also featured strongly in some responses, where individuals' past experiences or imagined experiences took precedence over the current physicality and functionality of the places respondents referred to.

### **11.4 Acculturation**

Place consumers also discussed the negotiation of Liverpool's urban landscape as based on a process of acculturation. Varying levels of acculturation were evident among the participants involved.

Some respondents indicated that they had some mediated knowledge of Liverpool which provided them with a starting point for negotiating the city centre, but was not enough to fully understand,

*No, because it's the first time that we've come to England so we know Liverpool because of The Beatles, we know Manchester because of the*

*football, Manchester United, we know London but we don't know anything else. (pc 10)*

Information about the city was seen as an important part of negotiating it but was not indispensable to making sense of different spaces,

*No, we have no idea because we went to the bus station and we wanted to find an information point to see what things we could see but there isn't one so we asked people on the street. (pc 10)*

As a visitor to the city, this respondent had a fixed idea of where to gain extra knowledge. Information centres and local people are therefore seen as playing a facilitating role in visitors' acculturation.

Different sources of knowledge were seen as more or less valid. The most valued source of knowledge was direct experience of a place. However, the extent of exposure also predicted the level of acculturation. The following extracts indicate how direct experience of the urban landscape affected place consumers' perception of it. This visitor suggests that perceptions of the city are not fixed but can change through the consumption of different spaces,

*We haven't had much of a chance to look around because we've only been here for a few hours, so tomorrow we'll have a better idea. (pc 71)*

Below, a respondent from near Chester, had recently started commuting to Liverpool and through this experience she had started to feel less of a stranger and more that she belonged,

*I feel more at home now that I am getting to know it more....yes I'm feeling less of a tourist and it's more a homely place now than it was before with working here and coming here every day now. (pc 29)*

In addition, a visitor who had recently made friends with a local couple indicated that his exposure to the city and people from the city had enabled him not only to make his way round the city and enhance his knowledge of the physical landscape, but also to understand the culture of Liverpool on a deeper level,

*I think now I'm able to know what it's about, what people like and enjoy doing, what motivates them, what the biggest talking points are to do with this city and just that type of thing, yes, I can identify with that now, yes. (pc 26)*

Finally, this visitor suggests that while mediated images can provide knowledge of a place, the contextualisation of these images within their original environment provides a different level of experience,

*Liverpool Football Club and The Beatles, were things that I already knew before I came here. You never really know how a city looks until you visit it, so I'm really glad that I can have some precise pictures of places I've always read things about before without seeing them in reality. (pc 39)*

Negotiating the city did not only involve a process of acculturation for visitors but for residents too. One resident, originally from Columbia, emphasised the importance of time in the process of acculturation,

*Well there are certain things that I guess I have in common but now that I have been living here for about three years I will probably have more things in common than my friend who has been here for one year. So it depends how long I have been living in a place before I start to get used to certain things like the weather, food, people. (pc 100)*

However, the respondent below indicates that even for residents originally from other British cities, living in Liverpool requires some adjustment,

*I'm a Cockney, I come from West Ham, but I've lived in Liverpool since 1972, so you know I've got used to the people, the way of life, because I'm from down south you know. (pc 52)*

Other residents or ex-residents, however, gave the impression that the city had perhaps become over familiar,

*We're not typical because I lived here for a long time so I don't want to come back because there's nothing that new to me or different, but we would come back to go to the theatre or something. (pc 79)*

*It's really boring when you've been living round here for 18 years, so it could be made more exciting. (pc 11)*

On the other hand, for other respondents, the urban landscape represented a continuous journey of (re)discovery,

*The museum on odd occasions I go to, especially after I went to Paris. I went to Paris one year and I thought, 'We've got the same in Liverpool so I'll go to the Liverpool one because I haven't been there for about 15 years.' I went in and I was amused or amazed rather to see what they had there. (pc 8)*

*From what I have seen of this culture now I am quite aware that I have seen some major aspects but many of them I haven't seen. Even my own home town, Lyon, I don't dare to say that I know it completely. It takes time to understand what makes a place. (pc 39)*

#### **11.4.1 Summary**

Analysis of participants' remarks has demonstrated that negotiation of the urban tourist landscape involves a process of acculturation. Experience of a place is cumulative and changes over time. Different sources of knowledge are considered more or less valid and provide diverse levels of experience. Direct experience of a place seems to be considered the most revealing. However, this is not to say that every experience is the same. Residents too indicated how their experiences of the city differed from other residents. For some, over familiarity with the city left them uninspired, for others the urban landscape provided an opportunity for constant (re)discovery.

#### **11.5 Discussion**

The findings presented above reinforce theories concerning the connection between identity, space and practice,

Identity is intimately connected with a space that you make your own by moving in it. Identity is something gained in the spatial dimension, enacted in leisure time as a result of bodily experiences of both being surrendered to space and being able to form and create space by our movements in it. (Nielsen, 1999:278, in Crouch, 1999)

As is argued here, the main means of negotiating space is by moving through it. People's identities are formed and informed through their interaction with various spaces. However, it is clear that actors are not simply positioned in a passive role, consumed by the space around them. Actors are both absorbed by the space in which they find themselves but also impose themselves upon it. Examples provided above indicate how people personalise space through chosen paths and practices. Furthermore, respondents' comments challenged "the tourist gaze" (Urry, 1990) as the predominant means of capturing the landscape around us. On the contrary, they indicated how,

Leisure provides the possibility of changing space into place through a multiple sensory range of experience and through seeking, deliberately or not, certain landscapes and places, creating and appropriating them by moving and perceiving in them. (Nielsen, 1999:279, in Crouch, 1999).

The findings indicate how sights, sounds, smells and physical contact all play a part in the consumption of the urban landscape.

However, aside from the more physical and functional aspects of the consumption of space, respondents described how they negotiated space in an emotive sense. Bagnall (1996; 2003) has argued the case that at heritage sites people relate to the physicality of the environment which they are in, but also that the physicality can trigger an emotional response. This kind of reaction also appears to apply to the urban tourist landscape as a whole. Place consumers, for example pc 51, p. 233, demonstrated how their own emotions brought places to life. Moreover, as in Bagnall's work, imagination played a significant part in the consumption of space. This emotional realism, however, which came from within, was not always taken for granted as factual. Some respondents re-addressed their narratives and challenged their own rose-tinted memories of how life was in the past.

In addition, it was interesting to see how place consumers, and in particular residents, did not always proudly embrace the urban landscape, as a symbol of their own identity. The notion of taking pride in local culture is a point which has perhaps been overemphasised. While there were examples of residents who did feel proud of their heritage, there were others who expressed more negative feelings towards the way the culture of the city was developing. Therefore, it is clear that residents do not passively adopt the urban landscape as a symbol of their own and local identity, but they are active in challenging this.

Another point which became apparent in the analysis of data was how the connections between identity formation and space did not only relate to leisure time, where the emphasis has been placed through the notion of "post-work" society (Rojek, 2000:3). As highlighted in previous chapters, the consumption of culture should not only be considered in relation to leisure time. It was clear that in work time too respondents interacted with space and that the boundaries between work and leisure time were not always strictly defined. This relates back to questions of performance discussed in the previous section where it was clear that place consumers took on simultaneous roles. The de-differentiation of work and leisure activity, especially in the context of the simultaneous production and consumption of culture, seems to reinforce this point.

A final point which needs to be addressed here in relation to the findings, is that proposed by Rojek (2000:34) who suggests that,

leisure in Fordist society is focused on consumption activity. Shopping and accumulation become the focus of non-work time. Workers become entangled in a cycle of work and spend. So that traditional notions of leisure as involving the 'freedom to be' (Kelly, 1987) become ever more irrelevant in the 'quest to have'.

The findings presented above support this view only to a certain extent. Some respondents expressed a total dislike for shopping. While others did tend to focus on the city centre as a place to shop, they often combined this activity with social activity such as spending time with friends and family. Others sought out places to spend time creatively or just sit and contemplate. Therefore, I am inclined to agree here with Crouch (2000:70) that the consumption of space is also concerned with "non-commodity values".

## **11.6 Conclusion**

The findings of this chapter have established the relationship between space, identity and practice. The urban landscape is constituted physically by the physical structures of the landscape but also by the way place consumers interact physically with the environment. Therefore, the identity of place and that of the individual are mutually constitutive. Place consumers are active in negotiating urban space. While physical landmarks and information relating to them represent markers for place consumers, place consumers are selective in how they use these markers and they interpret the urban landscape in their own way. Again, this reinforces the discursive and dialectical interaction of structure, as embodied in the organising principles of tourism and urban institutions, and of the agency of place consumers.

Interpretation of space, however, does not only depend on physical action, but on a multi-sensory experience. Part of this multi-sensory experience is the emotional journey on which respondents travelled on as they negotiated the city space and which created an emotional realism in space which otherwise may have been defunct of real meaning for the individual. Some emotions were sought out intentionally; others were spontaneously generated through interaction with physical spaces. Furthermore, emotions were not only positive, but negative too, therefore consolidating the active role of the place consumer in the construction of space. The way space is formed and

presented is not merely accepted but is contested in various ways. In addition, negotiation of the urban landscape was not only rooted in the present but through place consumers' imaginations was contextualised in terms of past events. Furthermore, the current regeneration of Liverpool also enabled respondents to transport themselves on an imaginary journey to the not so distant urban landscape of the future.

The emphasis that place consumers placed on the emotional element of their experience challenges the centrality of the fixed physical form of the urban landscape. Moreover, suggestions that the contemporary consumption of space is centred around the accumulation of material commodities neglect the way in which space is also formed in social terms through an individual's interaction with others. The extent to which consumption of space is focused around leisure time has also been over-emphasised since it is evident from the findings that some place consumers do not cease to interact with the urban landscape in their work time. For some even their work time involves the production and consumption of the urban landscape.

Moreover, negotiation of the urban landscape was not a static process but involved a process of acculturation which began in the past and looked forward to the future. Knowledge was central to this process of acculturation. However, different sources of knowledge were considered more or less valid, with direct experience of the place being regarded as the most legitimate. Acculturation was a process which both visitors and residents underwent. Furthermore, while some respondents felt they had reached a point of saturation in their discovery of the city, others felt that negotiation of the urban landscape represented a constant journey of (re)discovery.



## **12. General Discussion**

Having presented the findings from a range of sources including written documentation, participant observation, service provider and place consumer interviews, this chapter will be devoted to discussing the most salient themes which have arisen from these sources.

### **12.1 Image, Identity and Belonging**

#### **12.1.1 Identifying Liverpool's Place Consumers**

One of the original objectives of the research was to identify who the place consumers of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape were. Place consumers were categorised in terms of characteristics which were elicited such as visitor, resident, age group, gender, ethnicity, and place of residence. However, as data analysis progressed, it became clear that what was just as significant, if not more so, was how place consumers identified themselves, and how this related to the image and identity of Liverpool and also of the particular areas of the city which they were using. Place consumers referred specifically to various personal characteristics which they related to their use of the urban landscape. For example, ethnicity / place of origin, place of residence, age, gender, sexuality, physical ability, profession, socio-economic status were all referred to. However, respondents also identified themselves in other terms such as personal tastes (in music, for example), preferred pastimes and so on. While socio-demographic profiling is used for marketing purposes by organisations such as The Mersey Partnership (2008b), this method only provides a partial understanding of the identity of place consumers and how this might relate to their use of the urban tourist landscape.

While comparison of participant observation and interview data indicated that the profile of respondents within each of the five sample locations was very diverse, there were some characteristics which featured strongly in some locations rather than others. For example, it appeared that Liverpool city centre was popular with younger people. The majority of respondents in the city centre seemed to be under 45. However, some parts of it such as the Cultural Quarter and the Waterfront were frequented to a greater extent than others by respondents over this age. Moreover, some areas, for example, Hope Street Quarter, did not seem to attract many children, but their presence was more notable in the Cultural Quarter due to school trips and group visits to World

Museum Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery and Picton Library. However, their presence in this area was not necessarily due to their own choice. While the Waterfront was popular with respondents with children, the findings suggested that they only appeared to use certain parts of the area. It was clear that many families did not frequent restaurants and cafés at the Albert Dock for example, because as some of them stated this would be too costly for them. If the strategic aim of the city is to become a major European destination (The Mersey Partnership, 2008a:3) then a more family friendly policy is needed to fit in with the more family-oriented lifestyle of other national cultures. Such a policy would also address the issues raised by respondents from the U.K. concerning lack of facilities and activities for children.

Furthermore, while ethnic diversity in Liverpool city centre was not very apparent, place consumers in Hope Street Quarter and the Retail Quarter were the most diverse in terms of ethnicity. While the large majority of interviewees in the Cultural Quarter were white and English, observation indicated that there was a considerable number of place consumers of Asian origin in this area. On the other hand, the presence of Black people in the overall sample was limited. The relatively low level of ethnic diversity in Liverpool city centre questions both the slogan '*Liverpool – The World in One City*', used in Liverpool's bid for European Capital of Culture and also the extent to which Liverpool represents a socially inclusive community, one of the objectives of Liverpool's cultural strategy (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 6; 72). I will return to and develop the issue of social inclusion later in this discussion.

### **12.1.2 Tourism and Everyday Life**

The design of this piece of research is based on the dialectical and discursive relationship between the urban tourist landscape and everyday life. It is based on the premise that in order to understand one component, it is necessary to consider its relationship with the whole system. One of the most manifest findings was that the place consumers were not just visitors but also people just going about their everyday business. While much tourism research tries to compartmentalise tourist activity and to categorise visitors (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Hall and Page, 2002), this is difficult to achieve due to the complexity of tourism phenomena. In theoretical terms, tourism has largely been interpreted as a search for new experiences, and an activity which is removed from the everyday (Urry, 1990). However, the findings of this research have shown that the experience of the urban tourist landscape is not neatly slotted into leisure time but interjects into different spheres of everyday life such as

work, travel and transitional moments between different activities. Therefore, "it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain any simplistic notion of a clear distinction between work, tourism, leisure and play" (O'Dell, 2005: 22) and to try and disassociate these would be to miscomprehend the nature of the urban tourism experience.

The findings of this research question the stark separation of tourists and residents in studies relating to the consumption of space and also in the strategic approach adopted by place marketing agencies in Liverpool. It became clear from observation and place consumer interview data that in terms of how a 'product' is consumed and which 'products' are consumed there is not always a clear distinction in the cognitive and behavioural responses of these two different groups. Consideration of both the participant observation and place consumer interview data indicated that residents and visitors shared the same spaces and engaged in similar activities. Most place consumers' lives were shaped around their everyday routines which were not generally based in the city centre, apart from those who worked there or lived there. Therefore, the urban tourist landscape, when consumed for leisure, can represent a heightened experience, both for residents and visitors. As O' Dell (2005: 14) rightly argues the search for new experiences is not only part of the tourism experience but is an element of many leisure activities. Therefore, it is a misconception to presume that all residents are familiar with local culture; firstly because not all residents belong to the 'dominant' culture, and secondly because many sub-cultures make up local culture.

Moreover, visitors did not seek only difference but commonality. Many strongly identified with Liverpool as a result of shared characteristics with their place of origin or residence. Therefore, the findings are in agreement with Mordue (2005) who claims that engagement with tourist sites depends more on cultural capital than the status of being a local or tourist. Furthermore, the status of local or tourist was often self-defined. These findings therefore question traditional notions of tourist and resident identities. This highlights the difficulty in categorising consumer groups. Differences in consumption patterns and in meaning are far more sophisticated and subtle than fixed typologies tend to suggest. The consumption of space becomes a personalised experience defined by many influencing factors. Needless to say, a deeper understanding of the urban tourist landscape and the complexity of its consumption bears directly on the making and execution of policy in this whole area.

### **12.1.3 Locality, Work and Leisure**

There has been considerable debate regarding the role of locality, work and leisure in the formation of personal identity (Roberts, 1999; Rojek, 2000). Changing modes of production and consumption within the last few decades have been influential. This has led, in some cases, to an overemphasis on the importance of leisure in people's everyday identities.

It has been established by authors such as Bourdieu (1984) and Sharpley (2000) that consumption practice, which takes place for the most part in leisure time, is a reflection of consumers' identity to some extent. There was some evidence to support this argument in the findings presented above. For example, certain activities were closely linked with aspects of respondents' identities. In particular, there appeared to be a strong notion of personal and group identity which was related to the places people frequented in the evening (particularly when going for a drink). Yet, it was the social aspect of the activity which seemed to constitute an element of people's identities rather than the activity itself. However, as Rojek (2000: 37) argues, work is still a significant defining component of people's identity. Many respondents indicated that work took precedence over leisure and constituted a significant part of their identity. However, a considerable number of respondents, especially women, suggested that their everyday home life and relationships were equally as relevant as their work or leisure activity. Home lives were rooted in a particular residential area, therefore indicating a strong case for the link between residential locality and identity, as found by Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005:207).

For many respondents then, residents and visitors alike, Liverpool's urban tourist landscape was not part of their everyday reality, but a place of otherness. However, this was true to varying extents. Some residents, for example, passed through the urban tourist landscape daily as they went to work. Others lived within it. In these cases, the urban tourist landscape became these respondents' everyday environment and as such it lost its 'extraordinary' appeal. Yet, there were other times when for the same respondents the consumption of the urban tourist landscape became a heightened experience, situated in a place of otherness beyond the confines of work and routine activity.

#### **12.1.4 Socio-cultural Identity and the Image of Liverpool**

The findings also demonstrated that images of the city and of individuals within it are not entirely separate. The image of the city was projected on to people's identities and vice versa. Respondents related their actions to the city and how they perceived it. It was also recognised that the identity of the city was socio-culturally constructed and was fluid and dynamic. While there were some standard iconic cultural references, people had different perceptions of the identity of Liverpool. Interviewees tended to identify people as the most significant aspect of Liverpool's culture. On the whole, Liverpool culture was considered as something unique which distinguished it from other places, although the extent to which places continued to possess unique identities was a contested issue which will be discussed in more detail shortly.

Respondent's comments also indicated that Liverpool identity is not strictly related to the geographical boundaries of the city. Nonetheless, the River Mersey did represent both a physical and ideological boundary in terms of how respondents, especially residents, related to the city. On the whole though, how respondents defined themselves in relation to the city was very subjective. Many residents were proud of Liverpool but did not indiscriminately identify themselves with the city. Therefore, claims to local identity appear to be relative and subjective. Nonetheless, in Liverpool there seems to be a strong sense of identification with the city amongst both residents and visitors, born and bred Liverpoolians and 'adopted' Scousers. However, while locality features strongly in people's sense of belonging, globalisation is clearly transforming links between place and belonging to some extent (Featherstone, 1990; Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst, 2005). Changing notions of how people relate to the local and also which people relate to the local are indicative of this development. For example, tourism and media flows equip more people with the cultural capital to relate to another 'local' culture. So, it seems, tourism is changing the image and structure of places and therefore the way local people feel about and relate to the city space.

The image and therefore the identity of Liverpool are certainly changing. As a result, the identities of the people within the city are changing too. Residents, who previously identified with the city, expressed how they felt it was being shaped for out-of-towners and therefore they themselves began to feel like the outsiders. This finding in particular coincides with research carried out by Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005:30) in the Manchester area which indicated that it is actually those who are 'born and bred' in their area of residence who now feel 'out of place'. Therefore, there is perhaps a need

to reconcile the aims of promoting Liverpool as a world class tourist destination (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b:18; The Mersey Partnership, 2005a:6; 2006a:9) and making the city socially inclusive and relevant to *all* its citizens (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 6).

Liverpool residents also felt that attempts to improve the city were focused on changing outsiders' perceptions, through superficial physical developments and images of a city which were almost alien to some locals. The reality of life in the city, and in certain areas in particular, they believed, was still one of hardship and social problems which were not really being tackled. While the majority of residents did not seem to consider themselves as disadvantaged in this sense, they suggested that the effects and expressions of these problems did impact on their own lives. However, since the majority of respondents did not consider themselves disadvantaged, this suggests that the city centre was not so accessible for those who do. I will return to this argument shortly.

Nonetheless, the findings also tended to demonstrate that changes in the urban landscape became part of residents' everyday reality. Evidently, the media played a large role in constructing images of the city. When referring to the city's regeneration, respondents often reproduced the rhetoric of the media and other organisations in Liverpool. For example, a few respondents repeated the promotional messages diffused by various organisations involved in the development of the city. In particular, the words used by The Mersey Partnership to promote Liverpool as "a great place to invest, live, work and visit" (The Mersey Partnership, 2004c: 2) featured in respondents' narratives. Also, many respondents' knowledge of physical developments in the city or what was happening at various attractions was based on information provided in the media. Even if they weren't living these experiences first hand, they were consuming these aspects of city life and its culture through the media and official channels. Therefore, experience is lived but also mediatised and imagined, or as Lefebvre argues, space is perceived, conceived and lived (1991: 38-39). Certainly, it seems that images of place, of Liverpool in this case, can be constructed through collaboration of place marketing agencies and the media.

What we can draw from the above observations is that the consumption of culture seemed to be used by place consumers more as a strategy of social integration and assimilation rather than of social distinction. Furthermore, it is clear that in Liverpool a

strong relationship exists between place, people and culture, which is utilised by the authorities and the media. People's strong sense of identification with Liverpool has positive implications for tourism projects and cultural initiatives aimed at social cohesion in the city. However, it seems that cultural and tourism policy makers and organisations need to adapt provision of experiences and facilities to the changing nature of everyday life. The implication for urban tourism researchers is that the subject needs to be considered from the broader cultural and economic contexts from which it arises. Certainly, the findings of this research have revealed that the consumption of culture and of the urban tourist landscape does not only take place within a leisure context, but involves a wider framework of the socio-cultural activity of everyday life.

## **12.2 Structure, Agency and Space**

### **12.2.1 Physical and Social Structures of the Urban Tourist Landscape**

The philosophical underpinning of this thesis is based on the dialectics of structure and agency, which challenges the structuralist assumption that human activity is purely determined by the structure within which it takes place. However, it does not claim that human activity is devoid of any kind of structure or that humans therefore act of their own free will. What it does reflect is the interaction of structure and agency in defining experience. Authors such as Britton (1991) and Cheong and Miller (2000) have adopted a predominantly structuralist or post-structuralist approach, to indicate how certain social forces affect behaviour and meanings within a tourism context. However, such a view overlooks the primacy of place consumers in creating their own experience.

The findings of the research indicate that the relationship between structure, agency and space within the urban tourist landscape is complex. Firstly, this is because space is defined by both physical and social structures. It was clear that while physical structures were significant stimuli in the experience of the urban landscape, social structures were equally important in defining experiences. The social structures include both people using the space but also organisations, groups and social discourses which impact on the nature of the space. For instance, the consumption of certain forms of culture has often been associated with specific social classes (Bourdieu, 1984; Veblen, 1979). However, while there was evidence that this tendency was being perpetuated through Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, some respondents indicated that the consumption of culture could cut across social class structures. Furthermore,

findings from the Impacts 08 study in Liverpool also suggest this to some extent (Impacts 08, 2007a; 2009). In addition, while it has been argued that consumption of tourist space is structured and defined by a capitalist discourse (Britton, 1991), the findings of this study only partially confirm this claim. Certain aspects of Liverpool's culture were considered to be commercialised, such as maritime heritage at the Albert Dock, and a lack of economic capital did sometimes prevent consumption. However, some place consumers found ways of not falling into the consumerist trap and experiencing the landscape through other means.

Secondly, the subject-object relationship is not just one-dimensional, as the subject can become the object and vice versa. For example, the place consumer (subject) can consume the urban landscape (object) but the urban landscape (subject) can also communicate to the place consumer (object). Place consumers, for instance, consumed the Waterfront visually through their gaze, but the Waterfront and its aesthetic structure in turn communicated the meanings with which it was associated such as relaxation, maritime heritage and so on. Furthermore, there are multiple subjects and objects, for example, intermediaries such as place marketing organisations, the media and so on, place consumers themselves and various physical and social features and representations which produce the experience of the urban landscape. Often these represented competing discourses. For example, respondents mentioned how through the media, Liverpool was often portrayed as a dangerous city, whereas at the same time an employee of The Mersey Partnership indicated that they were actively promoting the opposite message. Some place consumers perceived the city to be relatively safe, while others thought it was not, which impacted on their consumption. So, what is clear in terms of place consumers' use of the space is that they are active both in choosing which objects to engage with and also in deriving meaning from them. Furthermore, it is clear from the observation and place consumer interview data that place and the culture of place is not only created through official channels and structures but through spontaneous social exchange and performance. For instance, in Williamson Square in the Retail Quarter, what characterised the space over and above the retail outlets was the spontaneous interaction of people involved in various activities. So, while meanings of place are offered by place marketing agencies, place consumers create their own interpretations and can re-appropriate space in their own terms, in a reflexive and discursive manner. In this sense, place consumers can contest the structure of tourism and place marketing discourse. Moreover, they are both the producers and consumers of the cultural landscape.



Cultural and tourism strategies form a bridge between different physical and social structures, but, place consumers also find their own ways of interacting with and negotiating the physical and social structures of the urban tourist landscape. Therefore, the main point to be drawn from the last few paragraphs is that tourist landscapes work “as a nexus of circuits operating within production – consumption dialects enabled by the processes of negotiated (re)production” (Atejevic, 2000: 371). Production and consumption are not separate but interrelated processes within which economic and cultural discourse and practice are combined.

### **12.2.2 Active Means of Negotiating Space**

Another significant point to arise from the findings is that while place consumers are clearly agents in the production and consumption of the urban tourism experience, degrees of intentionality vary to a much greater extent than has previously been recognised by policy makers or even some academics. Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000) recognise how the consumption of the tourist-historic city can be incidental to its character, but they do not encapsulate the complex and fluid nature of place consumers’ motivations and consumption patterns. This is also an aspect of place consumer behaviour which the prescriptive and structured experiences described in the tourism strategy for the Liverpool region (The Mersey Partnership, 2003; 2005a; 2006a) fail to acknowledge.

It was also evident that place consumers adopt various means of negotiating the urban tourist landscape. While participant observation generated an idea of the physical negotiation of various spaces, place consumer interviews demonstrated that the experience was much more complex than this. It is not only the physicality of the urban landscape which produces the visitor experience but the fusion of the physical landscape and the physical actions, emotional and imaginary reactions of place consumers as they move through it. Therefore, consumption is not purely functional but has an emotional element to it. Also, through place consumer interviews it became clear that the experience of the urban tourist landscape involved a process of acculturation. Accumulated knowledge and also lived experience helped place consumers to make sense of the environment. However, this knowledge and experience was not the single factor enabling place consumers’ to interpret their surroundings. Such interpretation, almost always, also involved a spontaneous meaning response on their part. The place (the landscape, the buildings, the people

and so on) spoke to them and they spoke back to it, responding, albeit tacitly, in their own subjectivity and consciousness.

### **12.2.3 Audiences and Performativity**

People, as individuals and groups, featured as an integral element of the culture and landscape of the city. In various locations, people going about their everyday activity constituted actors on the urban landscape, their actions attracting attention and changing the ways in which others used and read the urban landscape. At the same time they could be considered as members of the audience, magnetised in various ways by the performances of others. Thus, everyday people increasingly become part of a spectacle (Longhurst, 2007). However, it has been established above that actions are not always conscious or intentional. This is evident in both the observation and place consumer interview data findings. Some performances were less strategic, such as the place consumer who spontaneously hugged the statue of John Lennon in the Cavern Quarter. Other group performances were clearly intended to make some kind of identity statement, for instance, the group of Goths, who gathered at the Pier Head. However, it was not always clear who the intended audience was. All the same, it appears that culture was used both as a means of self-affirmation and of communication to others (Longhurst and Savage, 1996). Therefore place consumers are, to varying extents, active in producing the experience of the urban tourist landscape. These findings also strengthen the case that the consumption of culture is not simply limited to the cultural establishments in this space but takes place throughout it. Therefore, the urban tourist landscape can be considered as an open living museum, and culture as an all-pervasive force.

### **12.2.4 Consuming Liverpool's Tourist Locations**

Data collected through participant observation and place consumer interviews produced comparable results regarding the way in which space was used. It was found that there was not one dominant reading of the urban tourist landscape but that different parts have different meanings and even individual locations can be interpreted in many ways. Below I aim to indicate how the physical, social, and temporal structure of different spaces related to how they were used. Comparing and contrasting the features and use of different city centre spaces in this way represents quite a novel approach. While Pearce's (1998) study considers the use of different districts in Paris, it is based on a functionalist and structuralist methodology. Here, the results indicate

the discursive relationship between structure and agency and highlight the socially constructed nature of space.

### *The Cavern Quarter*

Comparing findings from different methods and sources used confirms observations made earlier regarding the Cavern Quarter. Residents appeared to be blasé about the significance of the location in terms of its heritage. The association with The Beatles, for most residents had little to do with their everyday consumption of this space. Instead it was read on a much more personal and currently relevant level, for example, a place to go for a lively night out or just a thoroughfare to another part of the city centre.

Furthermore, comments from visitors regarding their difficulty locating this part of the city can be related to the participant observation data which indicate that levels of usage of this area are not particularly high although The Beatles are generally considered to be one of Liverpool's strongest tourism products. Furthermore, a recent survey of overseas visitors indicated that only 4.9% visited Mathew Street, whereas 26.5% had visited The Beatles Story museum or been on a Beatles tour (The Mersey Partnership, 2008b: 29). Therefore, there is potential for tourism bodies in Liverpool to make the Cavern Quarter a stronger feature of the urban tourist landscape. The recent opening of The Beatles themed 'Hard Days Night Hotel' may possibly increase consumption of this space.

### *The Cultural Quarter*

The Cultural Quarter appeared to be less part of the everyday landscape than other locations in the city centre. It is clear, especially from place consumers' interview responses that an ideological boundary encloses this area. Its association with 'high culture' is evidently unappealing to a large number of residents especially. It was found to have the least number of people moving through it, although, ironically it is considered one of the most spectacular and attractive locations in the city centre in terms of its physical features. While National Museums Liverpool who own two of the main establishments in this area are working through outreach work to try to raise the profile of this location and its associated activities, it appears that this kind of highly institutionalised culture still only appeals to a limited number of potential place consumers. A stigma still exists in terms of what culture is and who consumes it. On the other hand, the popularity of St. John's Gardens within the same area indicates the

demand for open, green space within the city centre. While the idea of 'cultural quarters' in cities is attractive to place marketing agencies in terms of attracting high-spending visitors and while the importance of cultural establishments to cities' evening economies has been recognised (Avery, 2000), it is evident that the most is not being made of this magnificent space in Liverpool. The potential to open cultural establishments in the evening was raised by both service providers and place consumers. In this space, especially in the summer, use of the gallery and museum and garden space could be coordinated. However, as yet, especially from a tourism point of view, the strategy for Liverpool appears to be based on its 'nightlife' (The Mersey Partnership (2006a).

### *The Retail Quarter*

Interesting findings were made concerning the Retail Quarter of the city centre. Observation of this location and interviews carried out here indicated that apart from its functional aspect, certain areas within it, such as Williamson Square, provided a hub for social activity and, especially for more elderly residents, presented an opportunity for social interaction. Therefore, this indicates that while tourism and leisure activity are often considered to be based on economic principles (Britton, 1991), they also involve "non-commodity values" such as friendship (Crouch, 1999: 270; 2000: 70). However, in terms of identification with and affection for the physical features of space, this was the area which participants were least attached to. It was not a place the majority of people would just go to. If they didn't want to shop or didn't like shopping they wouldn't go there, unless just passing through. However, from both participant observation and place consumer interviews, it was evident that events held in this location enhanced place consumers' experience and increased levels of engagement. Respondents also felt that late-night opening was beneficial given the changing structure of everyday life. Attempts by organisations such as Liverpool BID Company (Marketing@liverpool, 2005) to combine late-night opening and street events proved to be effective to some extent. However, respondents tended to stumble across these events while already in the city centre. Therefore, more publicity could increase awareness and levels of engagement.

### *Hope Street Quarter*

Data relating specifically to Hope Street Quarter indicated that religion and education are both integral to the culture of Liverpool. However, social activity in this area again is

institutionalised to a great extent, whether this is related to the universities or the cathedrals. Education especially is becoming increasingly part of the culture of the city and is representative of the increasing general trend of the knowledge economy. Students are a distinctive feature of this part of the urban landscape and their absence during the summer months creates an almost desolate feeling in this area. Participant observation and place consumer interviews indicated that visitors did frequent this part of the city for 'culture'. However, considering the emphasis on cultural tourism in Liverpool's cultural and tourism strategies (Liverpool City Council, 2002; The Mersey Partnership, 2003; 2006a) this area could be more vibrant at times. Bars and restaurants along Hope Street appear to be within reach of more wealthy professionals, whereas other bars in the area, in particular Hardman Street, are particularly associated with student culture. Therefore, there is a very strong association between the physical features of this location, the activity and identities of the people within it, though, perhaps too much so.

### *The Waterfront*

Participant observation data from the Waterfront indicated that the visual did indeed constitute a significant aspect of place consumers' experience. However, place consumer interviews indicated that other senses, imagination and memory also played a major role in the way place consumers interacted with this space, thus confirming theories developed by authors such as Bagnall (1996; 2003) and Crouch (2000). The physicality of the location was very significant with the difference in physical features at the Albert Dock and the Pier Head accounting for differences in the way these spaces were consumed and by whom. Place consumers' uses of the open space at the Pier Head often characterised it as a heterotopic space (Foucault, 1980; Hetherington, 1997). For example, youths who used the space to gather and consume alcohol challenged the social order of the space, especially in relation to the ordered configuration of the Albert Dock. Moreover, often the water tended to be the most significant physical feature as opposed to the man made features of this part of the urban landscape. While the area is strongly associated with the maritime heritage of Liverpool in terms of its location and the existence of the original dock warehouses, both the observation and place consumer interview data indicated that place consumers' motivations were based on the space providing somewhere just to wander as Mellor (1991) also found, or to get away from the hustle and bustle of the core of the city centre. Furthermore, the Waterfront appears to be predominantly a leisure space

which differentiates it from other parts of the city centre where work features more in place consumers' activity.

In addition, the weather was also very significant in the consumption of the Waterfront. Both participant observation data and place consumer interview data suggest that this space is particularly popular when the weather is warm and sunny. This confirms how place consumers use other senses apart from the visual in negotiating this space and also that the popularity of this space is related to the fact that it is largely an outdoor open space. Therefore, further physical development, especially indoor, could jeopardise people's appreciation of this space. The development of space along and around the Waterfront since the research was carried out will potentially alter the enclavic nature of the Albert Dock in particular since it will be less disconnected in relation to the rest of the city centre. On the other hand, further development and 'privatisation' of this space could result in intensifying the enclavic dimension of this area and extending it to the more heterogenic space at the Pier Head.

Although, as indicated above, some trends were identified in relation to particular spaces within the city centre, the consumption of urban space is not neat or organised by strict boundaries. Therefore the notion of quarters, for example, the Cultural Quarter, the Retail Quarter, the Cavern Quarter, and so on, do not give a realistic portrayal of activity within Liverpool's urban tourist landscape. There are in fact numerous areas in Liverpool city centre which could be considered as a 'cultural quarter'. Also 'The Cavern Quarter' is essentially drawing on the association of the area with The Beatles; however, there are other Beatles attractions around the city such as at the Albert Dock and in the suburbs. Therefore, The Beatles experience is far from rooted in this one location. These observations imply that attempts to compartmentalise activity and to categorise place consumers and locations, as do consumer typologies, market segmentation and the official Liverpool visitor guides (The Mersey Partnership (2005b; 2006b), do not correspond with the dynamic interplay of social and structural forces which constitute the urban tourist landscape.

Finally, it should be highlighted that since the data was collected, the city centre has changed considerably in physical terms, the waterfront and retail area in particular. These have also become more unified as a result of the Liverpool One development. These developments will clearly have an impact on how people use and relate to the urban tourist landscape.

### **12.3 Promoting the Culture of Liverpool: Economic and Social Implications**

The findings suggest that the promotion of culture in Liverpool has had a significant impact on the experiences of those visiting and living in the city. Liverpool's tourism figures began to rise in the years running up to 2008, the city's Capital of Culture year (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: 7; 2006a: 11; 2008a, 4). Though, in 2006 the city had not achieved its aim of becoming a "leading European city region" (Locum Consulting, 2008: 28). In the years between Liverpool winning the bid and its official 'culture' year, the bodies responsible for culture in the city began to promote culture in Liverpool through a number of themed years (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: 10). However, interviews which were carried out in 2006 indicated that many visitors to the city at the time were unaware of Liverpool's Capital of Culture status. Only three respondents gave Liverpool winning the title as the reason for their coming to the city. Yet, promotion of culture in Liverpool and especially the status of European Capital of Culture appear to coincide with tourism figures reaching an all time high in the city. However, care must be taken not to give too much weight to this argument since Liverpool's popularity as a tourist destination could also be considered in the context of the overall regeneration of the city. Nonetheless, cultural establishments in Liverpool have recorded unprecedented attendance figures (Liverpool Daily Post, March 24<sup>th</sup> 2006; October 13<sup>th</sup> 2008). However, it has been demonstrated through the research carried out that the consumption of culture is not fixed to traditional cultural establishments and that there is lots of informal cultural activity taking place in Liverpool. It is significant to note that Liverpool residents are not classed as visitors to the city centre and are therefore not included in tourism surveys relating to Liverpool, although residents of Merseyside are (The Mersey Partnership, 2008b). However, it is important to understand how Liverpool residents, too, use their city, if development is to be socially inclusive. Some residents who participated in the research did feel that on the whole people in Liverpool were becoming more involved in cultural activities, whereas others commented, that this certainly wasn't true for everyone in the city.

While Liverpool's cultural strategy (Liverpool City Council, 2002: 5) adopts a broad definition of culture, the actual cultural provision, especially in the city centre, does not reflect the full diversity of cultures in the city. Therefore, there appears to be a gap between the strategic aims of Liverpool City Council and the implementation of cultural initiatives (Kokosalakis *et al.*, 2009). From Liverpool City Region's tourism strategy

(The Mersey Partnership, 2003; 2005a; 2006a) it also seems that the focus of cultural activity is limited in relation to place consumers' definitions of culture in Liverpool. While it has been argued that the tourist experience only offers tourists a small insight into the culture of a place (Craik, 1997), this also holds true for other place consumers, including residents visiting their own city centre. This piece of research has demonstrated how urban cultures are very complex. In Liverpool specifically, not all elements of the city's culture are represented in the city centre. Also, people's experience of the city and their everyday life and culture is greatly diverse. Therefore, it appears that there is a need, as service providers and many place consumers tended to argue, to rethink which aspects of Liverpool culture are promoted, especially for tourism. It was felt that Liverpool's approach was too heritage-based, particularly regarding certain 'products' such as The Beatles. Culture is a web which encompasses many aspects of everyday life, therefore cultural bodies in Liverpool need to be more receptive to different expressions of culture and not impose what they believe culture to be.

There were many common issues present in service providers' and place consumers' responses relating to both Liverpool's cultural development and its development as a tourist destination. For example, standardisation, a focus on heritage, lack of provision for families and anti-social behaviour. A number of respondents identified a link between the physical regeneration of the city and a change in its cultural identity. The homogenisation of urban spaces does not just potentially jeopardise the marketability of a specific urban location but it also affects how people identify with their own city (Robinson, 1999: 132; 146). Therefore rather than enhance people's desire to spend time in the city and bring about some form of social cohesion, it could be said that it alienates them from the urban space. While most respondents would agree that tourism is beneficial to the city, there were a number of respondents who expressed concern that tourism was taking precedence over the social and cultural needs of Liverpool's residents. A number of them felt that the city's physical regeneration was for the benefit of visitors rather than residents. However, for other respondents the physical regeneration of the city offered the benefit of facilities such as Liverpool One, the new retail development, and the Liverpool Echo Arena, which at the time other cities had but Liverpool did not.



### **12.3.1 Culture as Commodity**

The convergence of culture and the economy whereby culture becomes more commercialised but also the economy becomes increasingly culturalised (O'Dell, 2005:19-23) has clearly sparked debate and given rise to challenges. One of the key questions arising from this debate is the extent to which culture can be considered a commodity like any other (O'Dell, 2005:19, Sharpley, 2000: 383-4). From a marketing point of view, culture, especially in relation to the urban tourist experience is very different from other 'products'. It is highly complex and is almost impossible to standardise or package. However, the marketing of experiences has been one way of turning place products and culture into something that can be bought and sold. In fact O'Dell (2005: 12) maintains, "Experiences have become the hottest commodities the market has to offer."

While this question was not posed directly to respondents, the commoditisation of culture is a theme which emerged from the data and which respondents felt strongly about. Some respondents felt, 'as has been argued in some of the academic literature (Clarke, 2000; Craik, 1997), that the culture of a particular place was not necessarily something that could be easily celebrated and promoted because of the multi-faceted nature of culture. From consideration of the different sources consulted in this research, Capital of Culture can be considered as a strategy for cultural regeneration. However, respondents appear to believe that culture under this strategy is mainly approached as a commodity to be sold. Even physical developments which may not be considered essentially as cultural, such as Liverpool One, can be seen as part of this plan to revamp the image and culture of the city and sell it to potential investors and visitors. However, there are some strands of the programme such as the Creative Communities initiative which are focused more on social rather than economic regeneration (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a). Nonetheless, while service providers were aware of this aspect of the programme, no place consumers mentioned it at all.

Regarding the extent to which culture could be considered a commodity, place consumers' responses likened the consumption of culture to that of material consumer goods, where the symbolic value is clearly linked to the construction of a personal identity (Sharpley, 2000). Furthermore, it emerged that the relationship between economic value and perceived value is relevant both to the consumption of material goods and to the consumption of culture. Value is often related to quality. The notion

that if something is free or cheap it can either be perceived as being of inferior quality or good value for money, applies equally to the consumption of culture and of consumer goods. Respondents indicated that sometimes free 'community' events would be snubbed and perceived as low quality, whereas a paid event would be expected to be worth the money. However, free events were also considered popular particularly because they were free.

However, in terms of monetary value alone the consumption of culture and that of consumer goods differ. Generally some economic outlay is involved in the acquisition of consumer goods, whereas with the consumption of culture this is not necessarily so, as indicated by examples of free cultural events and activities mentioned by respondents. Not all cultural products have direct economic value. For example, many museums in Liverpool have free entry. However, especially in the case of National Museums Liverpool, increased visitor numbers justify state funding for the museums and galleries incorporated. Furthermore, museums and visitor attractions are forced into creating revenue through museum cafés and merchandise, for example, in order to be able to compete with paying attractions (Craik, 1997: 135). Therefore, the relationship between the product, the consumer and economic outlay is much more complex in the case where culture is the product.

While culture was considered by some as a commodity in the sense that it is used as part of the urban tourism product in order to sell the city, respondents also referred to other dimensions of cultural experiences in the city which disassociated them from the qualities of a commodity. As discussed earlier, culture was also understood as informal social activity which was based on non-commodity values such as friendship and sharing common values and experiences. It could produce moral values such as education, pride and social cohesion and therefore contribute to the socio-cultural regeneration of Liverpool. While these values are recognised in the city's cultural strategy (Liverpool City Council, 2002), respondents seemed to feel that official bodies tended to give precedence to the economic objectives associated with culture and tourism.

However, it would be unrealistic to believe that culture alone could bring about regeneration. Respondents tended to recognise that some economic element was required to revive the city. They were not all totally adverse to some of the capital projects taking place in the city as they saw the potential social benefits of these too.

For example, the growing physical infrastructure could create employment. Better leisure facilities could provide an environment for social exchange and therefore improve social cohesion.

So it seems that the convergence of culture and economy which theorists such as O'Dell (2005) talk about is certainly evident in Liverpool. While some organisations in the city can be seen to be cashing in on culture, the value of culture is far from purely economic, though. Place consumers still manage to derive social value from their cultural experiences. Thus, again, this highlights place consumers' active role in constructing their own experiences despite the economic forces which shape them and reinforces the interdependency of structure and agency, the premise upon which this thesis is based.

### **12.3.2 Culture: Cohesion or Exclusion?**

Culture, especially within the context of economic urban regeneration, is known to bring some people together while excluding others (Sibley, 2005). Certainly, Liverpool's urban tourist landscape appears to be one which favours some while leaving others on the edge. Participant observation and interview data suggested that certain groups are excluded, for example, the poor, elderly and young. However, inclusion or exclusion was not only related to economic, social or cultural capital but sometimes related to other factors such as lack of physical access for the disabled or the elderly, or lack of free time from everyday commitments, especially for mothers with families at home. Nonetheless, while respondents addressed these excluding factors, their personal definitions of culture were largely related to commonality and solidarity. So, in contrast to Bourdieu's (1984) claims, the consumption of culture was mostly considered as a vehicle for social cohesion rather than distinction.

However, respondents did not necessarily believe official bodies encouraged the socially cohesive potential of culture. One of the main issues raised by both service providers and place consumers was the problem of antisocial behaviour in Liverpool. This was not believed to be specific to the culture of Liverpool alone, but related more to a national trend. While varying theories were presented regarding the cause of this issue, many respondents felt that creating a more inclusive cultural policy as regards young people and especially teenagers could help to resolve the problem. This included not only creating facilities for young people to spend their time but also tackling a perceived lack of moral values which was also related to the issue of culture

in general. While the exclusion of youth has been addressed in relation to Liverpool (Munck, 2003: 144-159), this appears to be an ongoing problem.

Another recurring theme in the findings was the ethnic diversity of Liverpool. The observation data showed that the city centre was not particularly ethnically diverse. Place consumers' views on the extent to which it was, were relative and varied. Academic studies such as those devised by Belchem (2006) indicate that the population of Liverpool is not particularly diverse in terms of ethnicity in comparison to other major British cities. However, regardless of levels of ethnic diversity, the important point to consider is to what extent different ethnic groups are accommodated and integrated. While the Cultural Strategy for Liverpool (2002) claims to be doing this, many respondents, both service providers and place consumers believed that there was scope for the cultures of ethnic minority groups in particular to be promoted and celebrated to a greater extent as an integral part of Liverpool's culture. Such a policy, they felt could help to tackle the problem of racism in the city.

While there appear to be increased opportunities for cultural engagement in the city and people in the city seem to be becoming more aware of and involved in cultural activity, research before 2008 (Impacts 08, 2007a: 53) indicated that a greater percentage of visitors to major cultural establishments in Liverpool were from outside the city. From interviews with place consumers and service providers it emerged that lack of awareness of facilities and events contributed to residents' lack of engagement with the urban tourist landscape. It appears from interviews with service providers that there is limited promotion of Liverpool city centre to the city's own residents and that marketing budgets for smaller cultural organisations and leisure attractions are restricted. However, promotion of what the city has to offer to its residents would add to the vibrancy of the city centre and help engage residents.

As yet, there is no concrete evidence to indicate that traditionally excluded social groups within the city are becoming more involved. However, the Impacts 08 research programme does show high levels of engagement of BME groups, youths and lower socio-economic groups in relation to Liverpool Culture Company events (Impacts 08, 2009: 4). While some initiatives such as Creative Communities have managed to reach out to marginalised groups, the future of this activity seems uncertain as Liverpool enters a transitional period following its status as European Capital of Culture. In other words, the infrastructure on which much cultural activity in the last few years in

Liverpool has depended may not be sustained in the future. That is not to say that cultural activity depends entirely on these central cultural organisations. Several organisations were identified through the course of the research which had been active for a number of years in trying to encourage cultural engagement among disadvantaged and excluded groups. Therefore it would seem that there needs to be a more synergistic approach whereby existing organisations which already specialise in delivering cultural initiatives and which already have roots within certain communities are given a more central role in the cultural infrastructure of the city and are allocated the resources required to do this.

Furthermore, while cultural policy makers in the city claimed to be adopting people-focused strategies (Liverpool City Council, 2002; Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b), many service providers and place consumers, felt that there was an emphasis on developing the physical infrastructure of the city at the cost of supporting groups which were socially and culturally marginalised. Therefore, there needs to be more support for social regeneration rather than physical regeneration. O' Dell (2005: 24) argues that "urban renewal projects designed to attract tourists and make cities into more exciting places of entertainment and consumption, have an overwhelming tendency to marginalise politically and economically weaker groups in these cities." Respondents themselves called for more investment in people and provided suggestions which could incorporate tourism and local cultural activity in Liverpool. For example, organising events and activities which are accessible to and can engage a wider section of the population, providing funding for local artists, and so on.

Finally, the findings have shown that it is important to have a vibrant and attractive city centre, and for people from different local communities and backgrounds to venture out, integrate with others and build and share common cultures. However, it is also clear that there are people for whom this is not viable. Therefore, support should also be given to encourage the development of cultural activity within local communities throughout the city. This activity can be of relevance to tourists too, therefore expanding the local urban tourist landscape. As Clarke (2000: 24) emphasises,

If we are to remain true to the principles of cultural development, we must strive to ensure that the determination of the local culture is in the hands, minds and practices of the local people. The ownership of culture should not be something which is transferred out of the local, despite the global pressures to do so.

## **13. General Conclusions**

This journey through Liverpool's urban tourist landscape has now come to an end. So, it is time to gather my thoughts and those of my respondents and reflect on what has been learnt along the way. In order to do this, I will first return to what it was I originally set out to achieve. The aim of this piece of research was to investigate place consumers' experiences of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape within its context as a site for the consumption of culture. An initial evaluation reveals the complexity and diversity which characterise the urban tourism experience and which have been recurrent themes throughout this thesis. This complexity has been intensified by the frenetic rate at which Liverpool's urban tourist landscape has been transformed throughout the course of this research. The regeneration strategies behind this transformation have aimed to develop the culture of Liverpool, with culture itself being one of the main drivers of this change. As a result, some would say that Liverpool has become more cultural, others would argue, less. All the same, it is clear that culture, in many ways, is a key element of the experience of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape.

### **13.1 Identity and Liverpool's Urban Tourist Landscape**

One of the initial objectives of the research was to identify who the consumers of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape were. As would be expected, the profile of respondents was varied in terms of socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, place of residence, occupation and so on. While the profile of respondents within each of the five sample locations was very diverse, there were some characteristics which featured strongly in some locations rather than others. Furthermore, unlike other urban tourism studies (Williams and Lawson, 2001), residents as well as visitors were included in the sample as active consumers, rather than simply observers of the impacts of tourism. However, residents of course were not a homogenous group but had different relationships to the city. Some residents did not have any particular attachment to the city and therefore considered themselves as outsiders, whereas there were visitors who thought of themselves as locals. So, the way that place consumers defined themselves was found to be just as significant as a standard socio-demographic profile, if not more, for understanding their experience of the urban tourist landscape. Identities emerged as transitional and dynamic, relating the place consumer to the urban tourist landscape and vice versa.

In addition, the use of the term visitors, rather than tourists, to signify those who did not reside in the local area, was found to be more realistic since people came to the city centre for a number of reasons apart from tourism. Moreover, motivating factors for both visitors and residents were more complex than other urban tourism research has suggested (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Page, 1995). It was found that each place consumer could have a number of motives for visiting the urban tourist landscape, and in particular different reasons for visiting different parts. In fact, different elements were consumed with varying degrees of intent. In addition, the profile and motivations of the place consumers involved in the research revealed that the spheres of tourism, leisure and work are converging. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to disaggregate these once separate fields of activity according to the spatial and temporal framework within which they take place (Carr, 2002; O' Dell, 2005). These findings challenge the use of typologies of place consumers and their motivations which tend to reduce the complexity and therefore the reality of the individual's urban tourism experience.

Another academic issue which was challenged by the findings was the notion that people are being defined more in terms of leisure than work (Roberts, 1999). Certainly, leisure activity constituted an element of place consumers' identities; however, as Wynne and O' Connor (1998) argue, people were not necessarily seeking to define themselves through the consumption of culture or leisure activity but just to make the most of their free time. In fact it was found that area of residence, if anything, was a particularly defining characteristic. However, identity was not necessarily fixed to place of origin, therefore indicating that identities are perhaps more fluid than they have previously been. So, we can conclude that the transformation of social and place identities renders the conceptualisation, use and meaning of the urban tourist landscape increasingly complex.

### **13.2 The Role of the Promotion and Consumption of Culture in Regeneration**

One of the key questions addressed in the research was how place consumers themselves defined culture and how this was related to Liverpool and its urban tourist landscape. This was considered important in terms of understanding how place consumers perceived and consumed culture rather than how it was defined in institutional terms. Through the course of analysis, the question arose of how, strategically, culture was being used to develop Liverpool's urban and tourism

infrastructure. As a result, a number of tensions became apparent between how place consumers conceptualised and practised culture, how in strategic terms culture was defined and cultural activity was planned, and how cultural initiatives were actually implemented. Since there was largely a consensus on the issues which need to be addressed and many of these were already included in the existing culture and tourism policies, this suggests that there is a problem concerning their implementation. Also, it appears that a gap exists between the range of cultures and cultural activities in Liverpool and those that are promoted by the major cultural and tourism bodies in Liverpool such as Liverpool City Council and The Mersey Partnership. Furthermore, while there is some level of public consultation involved in devising Liverpool's cultural strategy, the approach is still predominantly top-down. The draft cultural strategy is available on the internet but it is debatable to what extent this is accessible to the majority of residents. Establishing, through qualitative research, how people actually use or want to use space and then using this to inform strategies could result in a more holistic and inclusive approach to cultural policy. Also further study of the production and consumption of more informal culture by academic researchers rather than simply focusing on the experiences that take place in mainstream cultural and arts organisations could enhance understanding of this area. Cultural experience is also derived through social interaction and more mundane aspects of ordinary life (Longhurst, 2007). Policy makers and academics therefore need to take into consideration the forces of social and cultural change in order to establish how culture is consumed and who consumes it.

A further point which was raised regarding Liverpool's cultural infrastructure was that there was not so much need for cultural intermediaries such as Liverpool Culture Company, the local council run organisation set up to manage and deliver Liverpool's European Capital of Culture programme, but more need to support the existing cultural organisations or individuals involved in culture. People's views on Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture were varied. Some agreed that it could bring economic and social benefits to the people of Liverpool; others were more cynical and believed that the economic incentives were at the forefront of the city leaders' minds (Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004). Furthermore, while place consumers expressed their ideas of what European Capital of Culture should be, many were unclear as to what it actually was and would signify for Liverpool. Considering the emphasis on the role of local people in Liverpool's bid (Liverpool City Council, 2001), this seems to be a shortcoming on the part of Liverpool Culture Company.



Despite the sometimes limited definitions of culture represented through official channels, respondents' definitions and perceptions of culture were varied. Culture on the whole has positive associations and it is especially these which are promoted by tourism and culture agencies, but also which form the focus of academic study (Corner and Harvey, 1991). However, while heritage and culture are being promoted as a tool for social cohesion in Liverpool, many residents indicated elements of their cultural heritage of which they were not proud. Nonetheless, in relation to Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, culture was largely defined by place consumers in terms of the people itself and the commonality and solidarity which existed between them. Therefore, culture is seen as providing an avenue for social cohesion rather than for cultural distinction. However, Liverpool's culture was also defined as being diverse, particularly in relation to ethnicity. Social divisions were largely perceived to be related to differences in ethnicity resulting in racism and also differences in moral values, especially between the younger and older generations, expressed in the form of anti-social behaviour, all of which have been addressed in a publication edited by Munck (2003). The promotion of cultural activity, however, was considered to have the potential to tackle these issues of social exclusion and anti-social behaviour in Liverpool.

The increasing links between culture and the economy of cities has led both academics (Hewison, 1987) and, to some extent, participants in this research to conceptualise culture as a commodity. However, focusing on its social and moral value, respondents tended to identify culture as something different to other commodities. Although the consumption of culture was sometimes discussed within the context of contemporary consumer society where culture is sold as an experience with a financial end, culture was also seen to be about other values apart from economic, for example, moral, social and so on. Furthermore, while it has been suggested that to some extent the experience of the urban tourist landscape is based on a capitalist philosophy (Britton, 1991), place consumers did not appear to be duped or dominated by this philosophy. One of the benefits associated with consumer society is the increase in choice of products. As such, the physical regeneration of Liverpool and the leisure facilities it provides were considered by some to create more choice in that there are now new features present. Other respondents, however, felt that there is not necessarily more choice but just standardised features and establishments, which is certainly not to everyone's preference. This conflicting aspect of urban regeneration has been

discussed in relation to cities in general (Miles, 1998a; 1998b) and is therefore not just unique to Liverpool.

Another conflict arising from regeneration policy was that while the city centre needs to be vibrant, especially for the benefit of visitors, the regeneration of Liverpool appears to be focused mainly on the city centre. There is clearly a case for the distribution of regeneration projects to be more balanced throughout the city. It seems that there exists a dichotomous relationship between urban tourism and the local community in Liverpool. On the one hand tourism helps to dispel Liverpool's negative image. In this sense it is socially cohesive, encouraging people to visit the city and reducing prejudice. On the other hand, tourism in the city appears to be socially dividing. Tourism development in the city and the image that place marketers are trying to project are not necessarily compatible with residents' experiences (Kokosalakis *et al.*, 2006), therefore alienating them from the city.

Furthermore, physical regeneration was considered to have reverberations not just on the appearance and functionality of the space but on social networks in the city. Some existing social networks were broken down through the physical regeneration of the city centre especially, while others were perceived to be discouraged from coming together. Therefore, it was argued that there needs to be more support for social regeneration rather than physical regeneration. There needs to be investment in people to allow the everyday expression of culture to develop. The culture of the people of Liverpool was considered to be unique but also diverse. This diversity, coupled with the creative talent in the city could be employed in order to produce a distinctive tourist offer and simultaneously engage local communities in the cultural life of the city, similar to the creative tourism approach advocated by Richards and Wilson (2006).

Finally, while Liverpool's cultural and tourism strategies draw on the concepts of social inclusion and public participation, it seems there is still some way to go to make sure that these policies are embedded in long term strategies with sustainable outcomes. Findings from the Impacts 08 programme indicate that Liverpool Culture Company events were attracting more diverse audiences, with an above average representation of people from BME, youth and lower socio-economic groups (Impacts 08, 2009:4). So, at first glance cultural activity in Liverpool appears to be meeting the aims of national (DCMS, 1999; 2000) and local cultural policy (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b) to attract a broader audience base at events (Impacts 08, 2009: 4). However, this level of

engagement does not appear to be reflected in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape as a whole. Theories based on cultural, social and economic capital can help to understand the non-consumption of Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, and the empirical evidence from this research does appear to give some credence to these theories. Nonetheless, we should not overestimate the influence of these factors. It was found that often everyday obligations and therefore a lack of time was the reason for residents' non-consumption of the urban tourist landscape. Also factors such as having someone to go with were significant in determining whether certain features of the urban landscape were accessible or not. In addition, promotion and publicity of Liverpool's cultural events and facilities, especially to residents, were thought to be quite poor, and were often cited as a reason for the lack of engagement with the urban tourist landscape.

It appears then that the definition of Liverpool culture and Liverpool identity is relative and diverse. So, the production and consumption of culture is sometimes much more informal than policy makers appear to recognise. Place consumers' understanding of culture and their relationship with it is much more personally defined and includes different identities, images, encounters and memories (Crouch, 2000). Although many respondents did not claim to be intentionally consuming culture, it was clear that the consumption of culture was something that was common to all respondents. Simply by visiting Liverpool's urban tourist landscape, respondents were consuming culture in some way.

The implications for tourist and cultural organisations are that creating an inclusive strategy becomes quite difficult and implementing it to make culture relevant to everybody in the city, visitors and residents alike, constitutes a great challenge. However, culture, embodied in physical structures and social interaction is what creates the meaning of the urban tourism experience and is therefore inextricably linked to the urban tourism product.

### **13.3 Interpreting the Urban Tourist Landscape**

Another key objective of the research was to determine how place consumers interpret the urban tourist landscape in relation to its physical and social features but also in relation to their own personal agendas and characteristics. The concepts of structure and agency became particularly apparent in this strand of the research. While the physical features of the landscape are significant elements of space and place, just as

important to the meaning of the landscape is human practice. The physical components of the landscape and the 'official' directions relating to these may provide a series of pathways for place consumers to follow, but each place consumer devises a personal map coloured by their own interests, needs and mood (de Certeau, 1984).

Negotiation of the urban tourist landscape takes place through a variety of roles which place consumers adopt or are assigned. The performance of these roles involves both staged actions and also the expression of place consumers' everyday selves, thus highlighting the continuities between ordinary life and leisure and tourism activity (Edensor, 2000; 2001; Longhurst, 2007). However, negotiation of the urban landscape is not a static process but involves a process of acculturation which begins in the past and looks forward to the future. Knowledge is highly significant in this process of consumption, with direct experience judged to be the most significant source of knowledge, bestowing power on place consumers.

Power relationships were found to be related to both the structure and agency of the urban tourist landscape. However, power emerged in a much more discursive form than it has previously been conceptualised from a Foucauldian perspective (Cheong and Miller, 2000). While traditionally structure has been considered as a fixed entity and somewhat separate from the agents working within it, the data suggest that structure, is in fact rather fluid and both defines and is defined by internal and external actors (Devine and Savage, 2004:13). The performance of social groups or individuals can shape urban tourist space over and above its physical and scripted nature. Furthermore, the exertion of power can be intentional or incidental and overt or covert. This also implies that place consumers' performance is reflexive or non-reflexive. The reflexivity of tourists' actions has been addressed by authors such as Edensor (2000; 2001); however, this has not been related to theories of power to indicate how place consumers' performances impact on each other.

Furthermore, in agreement with other research relating to the visitor experience, interpretation of space is not only dependent on physical movement through space or social interaction but involves a multi-sensory experience drawing on the senses, emotions and imagination (Crouch, 1999; 2000; Bagnall, 1996; 2003). Experience was not only embodied in features and actions directly present, but in a dialogue between the landscape itself, culture and tourism providers, place consumers and external images of the landscape.

So, the experience of the urban tourist landscape can be understood as a combination of the physical structure and representation of the landscape on the one hand, and of place consumers' being (presence and identity), doing (actions and activities) and feelings (senses, emotions and thoughts) on the other. Especially in relation to the consumption of culture within urban tourist spaces, production and consumption are often simultaneous (Ateljevic, 2000). Interpretation of the urban tourist landscape is an individualised and personal experience. The consumer is active in both the production and consumption and therefore consumption cannot be seen as a by-product. This establishes the importance of researching consumption as a process in itself.

### **13.4 Developing Urban Tourism Research**

The scope of this thesis addresses two specific gaps in urban tourism research, highlighted by Robinson (1999). Firstly, by studying the consumption of culture within the urban tourist landscape, it resolves the lack of consideration of the cultural consequences of tourism within an urban context. Secondly, by presenting a case study of Liverpool, it provides an example of a smaller city "where tourism development is locked into the wider processes of de-industrialization and the shift from manufacturing to service sector economies" (ibid.:130), rather than of an already established 'world city'. Moreover, the findings of this research challenge in various ways how the urban tourism experience has previously been conceptualised. Most importantly, the study of urban tourism cannot be easily separated from the everyday people, actions and places with which it is linked. This study, however has taken on the challenge of "disaggregating urban populations, types of urban tourists and the processes surrounding urban tourism generally" (Robinson, 1999: 130) which other studies have shied away from. Studies that focus on the cultural implications of tourism development in the developing world, for example, do not encounter these complexities.

The research carried out has indicated that in theoretical terms, the urban tourism experience crosses many disciplinary boundaries. Therefore research carried out on the urban tourism experience should adopt a multidisciplinary approach. In this particular piece of research, I have engaged with theories relating to tourism, urbanism, sociology, cultural studies and marketing, therefore providing a broad conceptual framework from which to consider the nature of the urban tourism experience. Furthermore, this research has addressed a number of dialectic concepts related to

urban tourism in a holistic manner rather than dealing with just the one aspect as other research has done. For example, the production *and* consumption, the images *and* experiences, the representation *and* landscape, and the structure *and* agency of the urban tourism experience in Liverpool have been discussed. Much research to date has been one-dimensional in this sense, considering urban tourism from only one aspect of these pairs of concepts. In addition, most urban tourism research considers only tourists' use of the urban tourist landscape. The research I have carried out, however, reveals that consumers of the urban tourist landscape are not just tourists, but other visitors and also residents. This finding should be taken on board not only in academic research but in research carried out by practitioners also since most research carried out on Liverpool tends to be based on leisure and business tourism. Moreover, much of this research is of a quantitative nature which does not allow for an in-depth understanding of place consumers' experiences and their evaluation of them. So, overall, it is clear that there is scope for the development of research into urban tourism and urban tourist spaces and practices. This research field calls for its own methodologies and considerations, over and above those relating to mainstream tourism or urban studies.

On reflection, the methodological approach which was adopted proved particularly effective in achieving the aims of the research. In hindsight, a survey of a larger sample of place consumers which quantified various personal and social characteristics may have given a more representative and definitive idea of the proportion of different consumer groups which make up the urban tourist landscape. On the whole, however, the methods and conceptual framework employed appeared to complement each other, resulting in a rich account of the dynamic processes relating to the consumption of culture in Liverpool's urban tourist landscape.

Looking forward, this thesis will hopefully provide a springboard for more research into the links between culture and urban tourism, perhaps looking in more depth at the experiences of specific groups of place consumers. The rather ambitious subject area which it encompasses has not really allowed for this. This piece of research has considered the experiences of those who do consume the urban tourist landscape in some way, although the scope of this thesis did not allow for a detailed investigation into the experiences of those who do not. However, this would also be an interesting line of research to follow. Finally, the findings of this thesis have the potential to influence cultural and tourism policy in Liverpool and hopefully some of them will be

taken on board, thus helping Liverpool to achieve its aim of becoming a socially inclusive, premier European City.

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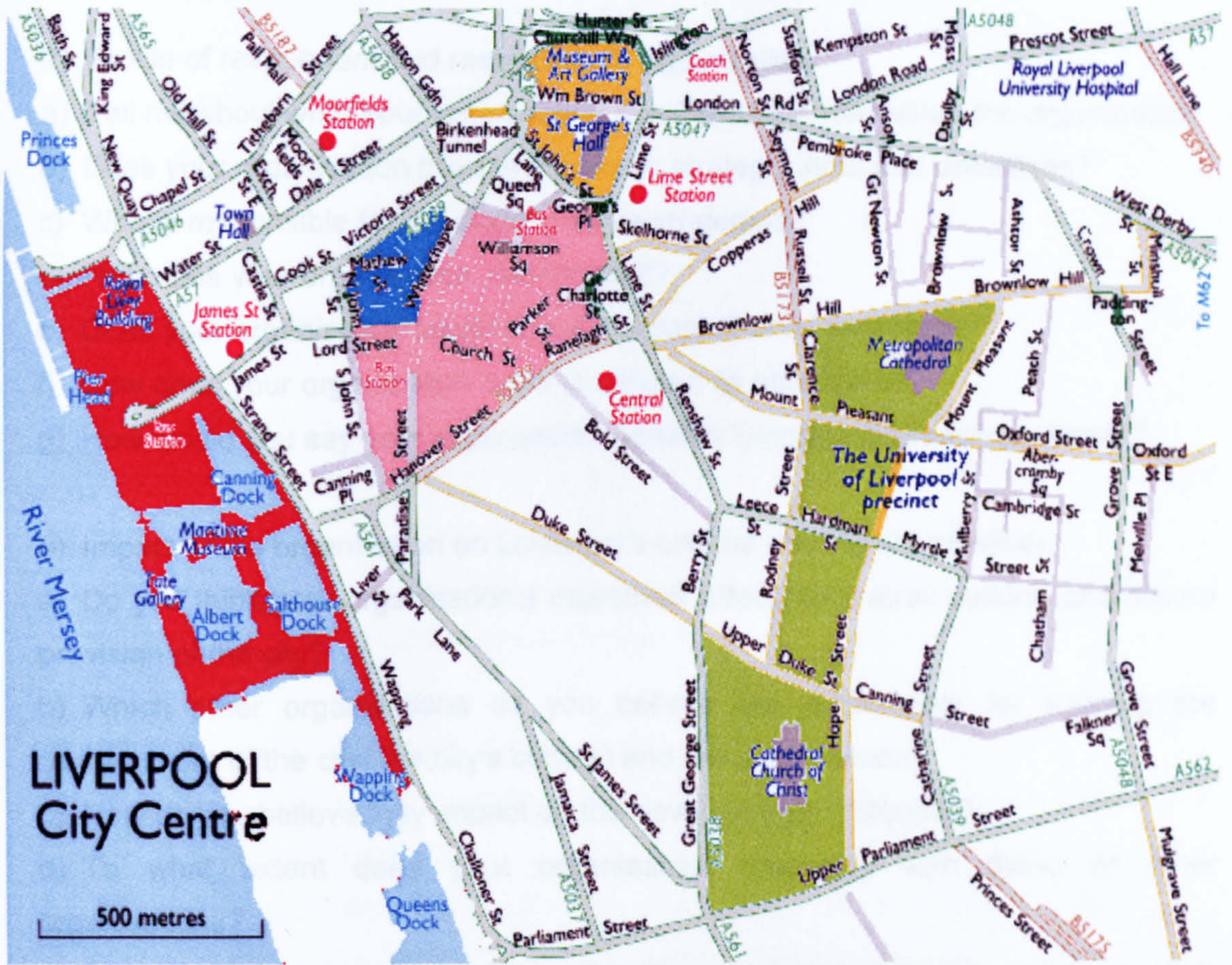
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# Appendix A: Research Tools

## Map of Place Consumer Research Locations



### Location Key

- The Waterfront
- The Cavern Quarter
- The Retail Quarter
- The Cultural Quarter
- Hope Street Quarter

## **Service Provider Interview Agenda**

- 1) Introduction to research project
  
- 2) Profile of respondent and respondent's organisation
  - a) Tell me about what your organisation does and your role within the organisation.
  - b) Does your organisation have any specific strategic aims and objectives?
  - c) Who is responsible for developing these strategies?
  - d) How does your organisation market itself?
  - e) Does your organisation target specific groups/market segments?
  - f) How does your organisation hope to achieve its objectives?
  - g) How would you say your organisation benefits Liverpool/Merseyside overall?
  
- 3) Impact of the organisation on Liverpool's cultural and leisure provision
  - a) Do you think your organisation's objectives affect the overall cultural and leisure provision of the city?
  - b) Which other organisations do you believe are responsible for shaping the development of the city/ the city's cultural and leisure provision?
  - c) How do you believe they impact on the development of the city?
  - d) To what extent does your organisation cooperate with these or other organisations?
  - e) Do you feel your organisation's objectives coincide with the vision of other organisations in the city?
  - f) Who do you consider to be your competitors?
  
- 4) Impact of the organisation's product and policies on the experience of the consumer
  - a) Do you monitor consumers' or non-consumers' behaviour and responses in any way?
  - b) How do you believe your product/service and/ or policies impact on the experience of the various groups in the city region?
  - c) Do you have any examples of consumers'/non-consumers' responses which lead you to believe this?
  - d) How do you believe other organisations impact on the experience of the various groups in the city region?

**5) Respondent's image of Liverpool and its attractions**

- a) What do you believe is the general image of Liverpool as a city?
- b) What do you think Liverpool has to offer?
- c) To what extent do you believe these characteristics constitute a cultural attraction?
- d) Do you believe Liverpool/Merseyside could be improved as a tourist destination?
- e) How far do you believe the city's attractions appeal to residents as well as to visitors to the city?

**6) Respondent's conceptualisation of Liverpool's culture and its Capital of Culture status**

- a) How would you define culture in relation to Liverpool?
- b) What are the implications of Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture 2008?
- c) How far would you say Liverpool represents *The World In One City*, as it is referred to in the Capital of Culture campaign?

**7) Organisation's involvement in the Capital of Culture**

- a) Does your organisation promote or support Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture in any way?
- b) Does your organisation cooperate with other stakeholders towards this end?
- c) What would you say are the benefits of a culture-based strategy?

**8) Conclusion**

- a) Is there anything else you would like to add which you feel is relevant to our discussion until now?

# Participant Observation Log

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>

**General Observations:**



## **Place Consumer Interview Agenda**

- 1) What is the reason for your visit to the city centre?
- 2) Have you been to Liverpool before? (visitors)  
How often do you come into Liverpool city centre? (residents)
- 3) Would you come to Liverpool again? (visitors)  
Do you like visiting Liverpool city centre? (residents)
- 3a) What for?
- 4) Why have you come to this part of the city centre in particular?
- 5) Which other parts of the city have you been to? (map to aid visitors)
- 6) Have you enjoyed your visit to the city?
- 6a) What have you enjoyed about it?
- 7) Do you think the city centre could be improved in any way?
- 8) How successful do you think Liverpool is as a tourist destination?
- 9) What do you think of Liverpool's tourist attractions?
- 10) Which ones have you visited?
- 11) Do you think Liverpool city centre caters for everyone?
- 12) What is your general image of Liverpool?
- 13) How important is the city's heritage?
- 14) Are you aware that Liverpool will be European Capital of Culture in 2008?
- 15) Has this had any impact on your visit/ on you?
- 16) What do you think 'culture' means?
- 17) How important do you think culture is?
- 18) Do you think Liverpool is a cultural city?
- 18a) In what way?
- 19) What aspects of Liverpool's culture do you think are represented in the city?
- 19a) Are there any aspects of Liverpool's culture which you feel aren't represented in the city?
- 20) Do you feel you can relate to culture in Liverpool?
- 21) Where do you live?
- 22) Where have you travelled from?
- 23) What is your age?
- 24) What is your nationality?

## Appendix B: Profile of Respondents

### List of Service Providers' Organisations

Interviewee	Organisation
1	The National Trust
2	The Mersey Partnership
3	Learning and Skills Council (Tourism Sector)
4	The Mersey Partnership
5	Liverpool John Lennon Airport
6	Liverpool Culture Company
7	Liverpool Centre for Arts Development
8	Merseyside ACME
9	Liverpool BID Company
10	HOPES
11	Scouse House
12	Art In Liverpool
13	Chaturangan
14	Downtown
15	Novas
16	National Museums Liverpool

	Gender	Age	Nationality	Resident / Visitor	Place of residence	Location	Date	Time	Motivation for visiting interview location	Motivation for visiting city centre
1	Female	35-44	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Thursday 29/06/06	11:30 a.m.	Meet a friend	Work
2	Female	65+	British	Resident	Huyton	Cultural Quarter (St John's Gardens)	Thursday 29/06/06	12:30 p.m.	Walker Art Gallery exhibition	Walker Art Gallery exhibition, lunch
3	Male	25-34	White / Black British	Resident	Prescot	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Thursday 29/06/06	4 p.m.	Window shopping	Shopping, lunch
4	Male	45-54	British	Resident	Hope Street Quarter	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Friday 30/06/06	10:30 a.m.	Resting near home	Lives there
5	Female	35-44	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Thursday 06/07/06	10 a.m.	Vivienne Westwood Cricket	Work
6	Female	65+	British	Resident	Prescot	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Thursday 06/07/06	1 p.m.	Waiting for someone	Shopping
7	Male	18-24	British	Resident	North Liverpool	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Thursday 06/07/06	2:50 p.m.	Relaxing in the sun, work	Work
8	Male	45-54	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St.)	Thursday 06/07/06	3:45 p.m.	World Museum Liverpool	Shopping, visit Museum
9	Male	18-24	British	Resident	Gateacre	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Friday 07/07/06	1:10 p.m.	Looking for venue for band to play	Looking for venue for band to play
10	Female	18-24	Spanish	Visitor	Manchester	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Friday 07/07/06	1:25 p.m.	Beatles attractions	Day trip
11	Female	18-24	British	Resident	Knowsley	Hope Street Quarter (Liverpool Cathedral)	Saturday 08/07/06	2:45 p.m.	Kill time, wandering round	Band practice
12	Female	45-54	British	Visitor	Cumbria	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Saturday 08/07/06	3 p.m.	Visit the Cathedrals	Weekend break, cultural tourism
13	Male	45-54	British	Visitor	Leicester	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Saturday 08/07/06	3:30 p.m.	Visit the Cathedrals	Weekend break, sightseeing
14	Male	45-54	British	Resident	Liverpool 3	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Monday 10/07/06	11:15 a.m.	Pass time	Walk baby in pram
15	Female	35-44	British	Visitor	Isle of Man	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Monday 10/07/06	11:35 a.m.	Shopping	Accompany family member to Walton Hospital
16	Male	55-64	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cultural Quarter (St John's Gardens)	Tuesday 11/07/06	2:15 p.m.	Visit library to find out what's on	Work
17	Male	55-64	British	Resident	Litherland	Cultural Quarter (St John's Gardens)	Tuesday 11/07/06	2:55 p.m.	Visit Museum	Show friend round, shopping

	Gender	Age	Nationality	Resident / Visitor	Place of residence	Location	Date	Time	Motivation for visiting Interview location	Motivation for visiting city centre
18	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Liverpool 8	Cultural Quarter (St. John's Gardens)	Tuesday 11/07/06	3:20 p.m.	Visit library to use Internet, look for work	Visit library, shopping
19	Male	45-54	British	Visitor	London	Waterfront (Pier Head)	Wednesday 12/07/06	9:30 a.m.	Kill time	Passport Office
20	Female	18-24	Polish	Resident	Liverpool 7	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Wednesday 12/07/06	10:10 a.m.	Look for work	Look for work
21	Male	35-44	British	Resident	Wirral	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Wednesday 12/07/06	10:30 a.m.	Take photos	Take photos
22	Female	65+	British	Resident	Wirral	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Wednesday 12/07/06	11:15 a.m.	Wander round, lunch, coffee	Day out
23	Female	18-24	Polish	Resident	Liverpool	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Friday 14/07/2006	3:40 p.m.	Visit Metropolitan Cathedral	Look for work
24	Female	35-44	British	Visitor	Bradford	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Friday 14/07/2006	4:10 p.m.	Visit Metropolitan Cathedral	Planning school visit to Liverpool
25	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Hope Street Quarter	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Friday 14/07/2006	4:55 p.m.	Go to mass at Metropolitan Cathedral	Lives there
26	Male	55-64	Scottish	Visitor	Edinburgh	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Saturday 15/07/06	11:15 a.m.	Killing time before Magical Mystery Tour	Friends 70th birthday party
27	Female	25-34	Czech	Resident	Liverpool	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Saturday 15/07/06	11:30 a.m.	Lunch break	Work
28	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Prescot	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Saturday 15/07/06	12:00 p.m.	Waiting for someone	Shopping
29	Female	25-34	British	Commuter	Chester	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Tuesday 18/07/06	2:15 p.m.	Lunch break, sit in sun, work at Tate	Work at Tate Gallery
30	Male	65+	British	Resident	Liverpool	Waterfront (Pier Head)	Tuesday 18/07/06	3:15 p.m.	Get fresh air and sun, pass the time	Get fresh air and sun, pass the time
31	Male	65+	British	Visitor	Stoke-on-Trent	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Tuesday 18/07/06	3:45 p.m.	Wait for coach	Visit a friend
32	Female	55-64	British	Resident	Liverpool	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Tuesday 18/07/06	4 p.m.	Relax in the sun	Gym
33	Female	18-24	British	Resident	Liverpool	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Tuesday 18/07/06	4:20 p.m.	Relax in the sun	Work
34	Female	25-34	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cultural Quarter (St. John's Gardens)	Wednesday 19/07/06	12:50 p.m.	Sit and read newspaper, Walker Art Gallery exhibition	Shopping, work

	Gender	Age	Nationality	Resident / Visitor	Place of residence	Location	Date	Time	Motivation for visiting Interview location	Motivation for visiting city centre
35	Female	35-44	African	Resident	Toxteth	Cultural Quarter (St John's Gardens)	Wednesday 19/07/06	1.15 p.m.	Study in the library	Library
36	Male	45-54	British	Resident	Bootle	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St )	Wednesday 19/07/06	2 p.m.	Passing through	Glaxo Neurological Centre
37	Male	18-24	British	Resident	Grassendale	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Thursday 20/07/06	11.20 a.m.	Busking	Busking
38	Male	35-44	British	Resident	Rainford	Cavern Quarter (Harrington Street)	Thursday 20/07/06	12.25 p.m.	Passing through	Job interview
39	Male	25-34	French	Visitor	Paris	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Thursday 20/07/06	2 p.m.	End of Magical Mystery tour, Cavern Club	Short break
40	Female	18-24	Black British	Resident	Toxteth	Hope Street Quarter (Liverpool Cathedral)	Friday 21/07/06	5.25 p.m.	Relax in sun, on way home	Shopping
41	Female	35-44	British	Visitor	Leicester	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Sunday 23/07/06	3 p.m.	Killing time, waiting for Isle of Man ferry	Take children to get Isle of Man ferry
42	Male	55-64	British	Resident	Liverpool	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Sunday 23/07/06	3.15 p.m.	Stroll, sit and relax by river	Day out
43	Male	18-24	British	Visitor	Widnes	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Sunday 23/07/06	3.30 p.m.	Look around the Albert Dock	Day trip
44	Female	45-54	British	Resident	Kensington	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Sunday 23/07/06	3.50 p.m.	Visit Maritime Museum (+ Museum of Liverpool Life but closed)	Show friend round
45	Female	55-64	British	Resident	Edge Lane	Cultural Quarter (St. John's Gardens)	Monday 24/07/06	10:30 a.m.	Sit and read newspaper	Shopping
46	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Aintree	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St )	Monday 24/07/06	10:55 a.m.	Passing through	Job interview
47	Female	65+	Welsh	Visitor	Colwyn Bay	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St )	Monday 24/07/06	11.25 a.m.	Walker Art Gallery exhibition, World Museum Liverpool	Walker Art Gallery exhibition, World Museum Liverpool
48	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Liverpool City Centre	Cultural Quarter (St. John's Gardens)	Monday 24/07/06	11.50 a.m.	Visit library	Lives there, shopping and errands
49	Male	18-24	German	Visitor	Germany	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Tuesday 25/07/06	4.15 p.m.	Beetles attractions	Day trip
50	Male	18-24	British (black)	Resident	Toxteth	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Tuesday 25/07/06	4.45 p.m.	Passing through	Job interview
51	Female	65+	Irish	Visitor	Northern Ireland	Cavern Quarter (Harrington Street)	Tuesday 25/07/06	5.15 p.m.	Beetles attractions	Short break

	Gender	Age	Nationality	Resident / Visitor	Place of residence	Location	Date	Time	Motivation for visiting Interview location	Motivation for visiting city centre
52	Male	65+	British	Resident	Bootle	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 26/07/06	10.45 a.m.	Having a rest	Shopping
53	Female	18-24	Polish	Resident	Ormskirk	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 26/07/06	11.20 a.m.	Looking for a summer job	Looking for a summer job
54	Male	18-24	Polish	Resident	Mossley Hill	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 26/07/06	11.30 a.m.	Waiting for a friend	Busking, work for the summer
55	Male	65+	British	Resident	Bebington	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 26/07/06	11.45 a.m.	Waiting for wife, reading newspaper	Shopping
56	Female	45-54	Irish	Resident	Krofty Ash	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Wednesday 26/07/06	2.10 p.m.	Cooling down, taking photos Go on Duck Tour but booked up so went on Sightseeing bus tour, lunch by river	Cool down by river
57	Female	18-24	Kiwi	Visitor	Christchurch, New Zealand	Waterfront (Riverside Walk)	Wednesday 26/07/06	2.25 p.m.		Visiting family, general tourism
58	Male	25-34	British	Visitor	London	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Thursday 27/07/06	10 a.m.	Rehearsing 'Bollywood Steps' dance performance at Metropolitan Cathedral	Perform 'Bollywood Steps'
59	Male	18-24	British	Resident	Hope Street	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Thursday 27/07/06	10.40 a.m.	Lives there, going out to look for job	Lives there, going out to look for job
60	Female	18-24	British	Resident	Smithdown Road	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Thursday 27/07/06	11.20 a.m.	Going out on lunch break	Work
61	Female	25-34	British	Resident	Litherland	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Thursday 27/07/06	5.25 p.m.	Meeting up with family	Work
62	Male	45-54	British	Visitor	Blackpool	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Friday 28/07/06	9.40 a.m.	Having a wander around, killing time	Renew passport
63	Male	35-44	Irish	Visitor	Ireland	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Friday 28/07/06	10.05 a.m.	Having a look around	Visit family on the Wirral
64	Male	55-64	British	Visitor	Middlesborough	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Friday 28/07/06	10.30 a.m.	Visit the Cavern Club	See son in world yacht race
65	Male	65+	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Friday 28/07/06	11.30 a.m.	Walking around, passing time	Walking around, passing time
66	Male	45-54	British	Resident	Homeless	Waterfront (Pier Head)	Friday 28/07/06	6.30 p.m.	Passing time	Homeless
67	Male	35-44	Dutch	Resident	Liverpool City Centre	Waterfront (Pier Head)	Friday 28/07/06	6.50 p.m.	Cooling down, reading	Lives there
68	Male	35-44	British	Commuter	Runcorn	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Friday 28/07/06	7.25 p.m.	Work (photographing celebrities)	Work

	Gender	Age	Nationality	Resident / Visitor	Place of residence	Location	Date	Time	Motivation for visiting Interview location	Motivation for visiting city centre
69	Female	35-44	British	Visitor	Nr. Chester	Waterfront (Albert Dock)	Friday 28/07/06	7.45 p.m.	Looking for a restaurant	Weekend break
70	Female	25-34	British	Visitor	Wales	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Monday 31/07/06	8 p.m.	The Cavern, bars	Short break, The Beatles
71	Female	25-34	British	Visitor	London	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Monday 31/07/06	7.50 p.m.	Beatles attractions	Short break, The Beatles
72	Female	18-24	Irish	Visitor	Ireland	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Monday 31/07/06	8 p.m.	Passing through after dinner	Short break, general tourism
73	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Allerton	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Monday 31/07/06	8.15 p.m.	Passing through after work	Work
74	Female	25-34	British	Resident	Liverpool 5	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 02/08/06	12-20 p.m.	Accompany a friend to Job centre	Accompany a friend to Job Centre
75	Male	18-24	Irish	Resident	Liverpool	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 02/08/06	12-35 p.m.	Look for work at the Job Centre, eat lunch	Look for work
76	Female	45-54	Irish	Resident	Vauxhall	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 02/08/06	1 p.m.	Having a rest, shopping	Shopping
77	Female	25-34	British	Resident	Wirral	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Wednesday 02/08/06	1.15 p.m.	Lunch break	Work
78	Male	35-44	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St)	Wednesday 02/08/06	6:10 p.m.	Waiting for lift home	Work
79	Male	45-54	British	Visitor	Cheshire	Cultural Quarter (Lime Street)	Wednesday 02/08/06	6:25 p.m.	Emmy Lou Harris concert at the Empire	Emmy Lou Harris concert at the Empire
80	Male	55-64	British	Commuter	Newcastle	Cultural Quarter (Lime Street)	Wednesday 02/08/06	6:35 p.m.	Work	Work
81	Male	65+	British	Resident	Crosby	Hope Street Quarter (Liverpool Cathedral)	Thursday 03/08/06	3:30 p.m.	Visit Anglican Cathedral, lunch at The Side Door	Showing friends round
82	Male	45-54	British	Visitor (Investor)	London	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Thursday 03/08/06	4-10 p.m.	Visit Metropolitan Cathedral	Look at a flat for investment
83	Male	18-24	Chinese	Visitor	Birmingham	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Thursday 03/08/06	4.40 p.m.	Visit the Cathedrals	Day trip - sightseeing
84	Male	18-24	British	Resident	Kirkby	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Thursday 03/08/06	6.05 p.m.	Passing time	Work
85	Female	35-44	British	Resident	West Derby	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Thursday 03/08/06	6-20 p.m.	Bring children to event in Williamson Square	Bring children to event in Williamson Square

	Gender	Age	Nationality	Resident / Visitor	Place of residence	Location	Date	Time	Motivation for visiting Interview location	Motivation for visiting city centre
86	Female	35-44	African	Resident	Norris Green	Retail Quarter (Williamson Square)	Thursday 03/08/06	6.35 p.m.	Passing through and stopped to see event, window shopping	Day out with family
87	Male	18-24	British	Resident	Page Moss	Retail Quarter (Queen Square)	Thursday 03/08/06	7.30 p.m.	Passing through to get bus, stopped to see event	Shopping
88	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Liverpool City Centre	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St.)	Saturday 05/08/06	10.30 a.m.	Passing through	Resident, shopping
89	Female	65+	British	Resident	Crosby	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St.)	Saturday 05/08/06	10.50 a.m.	See Kings Regiment in St John's Gardens, visit World Museum Liverpool shop	See Kings Regiment, World Museum Liverpool shop, T.J. Hughes, Brouhaha (Myrtle Street), Bold Street (shops)
90	Female	25-34	British	Resident	Orrell Park	Cultural Quarter (St John's Gardens)	Saturday 05/08/06	11.35 a.m.	Passing through	Lunch
91	Female	18-24	British	Resident	Toxteth	Cultural Quarter (St John's Gardens)	Saturday 05/08/06	11.55 a.m.	Visit library to use Internet to look for work	Library, go for coffee, Marks & Spencers
92	Female	35-44	British	Resident	Crosby	Cultural Quarter (William Brown St.) Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Monday 07/08/06	6 p.m.	Passing through	Work
93	Male	18-24	Spanish	Visitor	Bilbao	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Tuesday 08/08/06	6.25 p.m.	Visit Cathedrals	Day trip - sightseeing
94	Male	35-44	British	Resident	Orrell Park	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Tuesday 08/08/06	7.30 p.m.	On way home from visiting a friend	Visit a friend
95	Female	25-34	British	Resident	Algburth	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street)	Wednesday 09/08/06	6.20 p.m.	Work	Work
96	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Wallasey	Hope Street Quarter (Hope Street) Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Wednesday 09/08/06	6.45 p.m.	Having a walk	Work
97	Male	45-54	Swedish	Visitor	Sweden	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Friday 11/08/06	10.10 a.m.	Visiting Cathedrals	Conference
98	Female	35-44	British	Resident	Anfield	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street)	Saturday 12/08/06	10.30 a.m.	Passing through	Shopping, David. M. Robinson's
99	Male	25-34	British	Resident	Liverpool	Cavern Quarter (Mathew Street) Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Saturday 12/08/06	10.45 a.m.	Passing through	Shopping
100	Male	18-24	Columbian	Resident	Old Swan	Hope Street Quarter (Metropolitan Cathedral)	Saturday 12/08/06	11.35 a.m.	Visiting Cathedrals	Showing friend round



## Appendix C: Publications

Kokosalakis, C., Bagnall, G., Selby, M. and Burns, S. (2006) Place Image and Urban Regeneration in Liverpool. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 389-397.

Kokosalakis, C., Selby, M. and Bagnall, G. (2009) Strategic Approaches to Culture, Tourism and Regeneration in Liverpool. LSA Conference, Liverpool, U.K., July 8-10 2008. *Community, Capital and Cultures: Leisure and Regeneration as Cultural Practice*, Conference Proceedings (in press).

# Place image and urban regeneration in Liverpool

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## Abstract

It is recognized that to date there has been an overemphasis on received images and their impact on the selection and evaluation of tourist destinations; this paper will therefore focus on projected images. While the merit of both semiotic and discursive approaches to analysing place image are recognized, it is proposed that the discursive approach is more appropriate as it takes into account the advantage of deriving meaning from its broader context. Drawing on examples from Liverpool, UK, the discussion indicates firstly, how projected image is formed by a complex and dynamic network of agents and secondly the implications for urban regeneration. Particular reference is made to the influence of the media, the circle of growth and the promotion of culture. Importantly, it is argued that while projected images can influence perceptions, the consumer also plays a key role in this process. It is concluded that while image campaigns can play a role in the regeneration of the urban landscape, drawing on the cultural dynamics of the local population could enhance it further.

**Keywords** Culture, image, Liverpool, regeneration, socio-cultural implications.

## Introduction

The importance of place image is increasingly recognized, particularly in place marketing studies (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Selby and Morgan, 1996; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Pritchard and Morgan, 2001; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2002; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005). One focus has been the use of image campaigns to gain competitive advantage. It has been demon-

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strated how branding is often used to reinforce the uniqueness of places, which are otherwise more or less interchangeable in consumers' minds (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005). It has also been argued that image forms the basis of the selection and evaluation process. As the tourism product is to a great extent intangible, image is the only means a potential consumer has of comparing and making choices about possible holiday destinations (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005). The projection of distinctive images can assist in attracting tourists, because it is suggested that choices are made largely on the basis of attributes that differentiate the visit from everyday experience (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). However, if the selection process is largely based on image, then it can be argued that it is in the light of this first impression that the visitor will evaluate the actual experience of the destination. The more the pre-visit image is confirmed, the more visitors' expectations will be met. The implications for the destination then are that if the visitor is satisfied the more likely he or she is to repeat the visit or recommend it to others (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005).

From a sociological perspective, emphasis has been given to the symbolic consumption of place image. A connection is made between sociological theories, which suggest that individuals acquire social distinction through consumption practices (Bourdieu, 1984), and the ways in which people associate themselves with the symbolic significance of the image (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). While such perspectives are clearly valuable, it can be argued that there is an over-concentration on received images (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Pike, 2002) and the role of destination image in influencing tourist decision making and satisfaction (Pike, 2002).

Reviews of destination image studies (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Pike, 2002) underline how the topic has been treated in conceptual and methodological terms, but fail to highlight the significance of less researched areas,

specifically the lack of critical analysis of projected images. Few studies recognize the social, cultural and political implications underlying projected images (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Pritchard and Morgan, 2001), and how these may be exploited in line with the interests of place marketers and depending upon whether tourists, residents or investors are being targeted (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). Considering the recognition of how influential projected images can be (Selby and Morgan, 1996; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005), this area appears to deserve further consideration. This paper therefore will contribute to this field of research by arguing the advantage of the discursive over the semiotic approach to analysing place image. Then, drawing on examples from Liverpool, UK, the discussion will focus firstly, on how projected image is formed by a complex and dynamic network of agents and secondly, the implications for urban regeneration.

## Analysing place image

### Place image formation

Gunn's (1972) influential work has provided a conceptual framework for the analysis of place image. Gunn's hierarchy of place images suggests that place images are dynamic and vary according to whether they are consumed before, during or after a visit. Projected images are those that originate from various sources associated with the place and can be categorized into organic and induced images. Organic images arise from supposedly unbiased sources such as literature, education, documentaries and word of mouth. Induced images, on the other hand, are a result of the destination's marketing activities. Received or modified images represent the image, as it is perceived by the consumer. An important point to note here, is that the received image is formed by 'stimulus factors', in other words the place itself and any external factors associated with it, but also by 'personal factors', which can be understood as the socio-cultural and psychological characteristics of the perceiver (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). This would suggest that place image is not static in nature, but varies according to the point in time when it is consumed and the profile of the consumer or potential consumer.

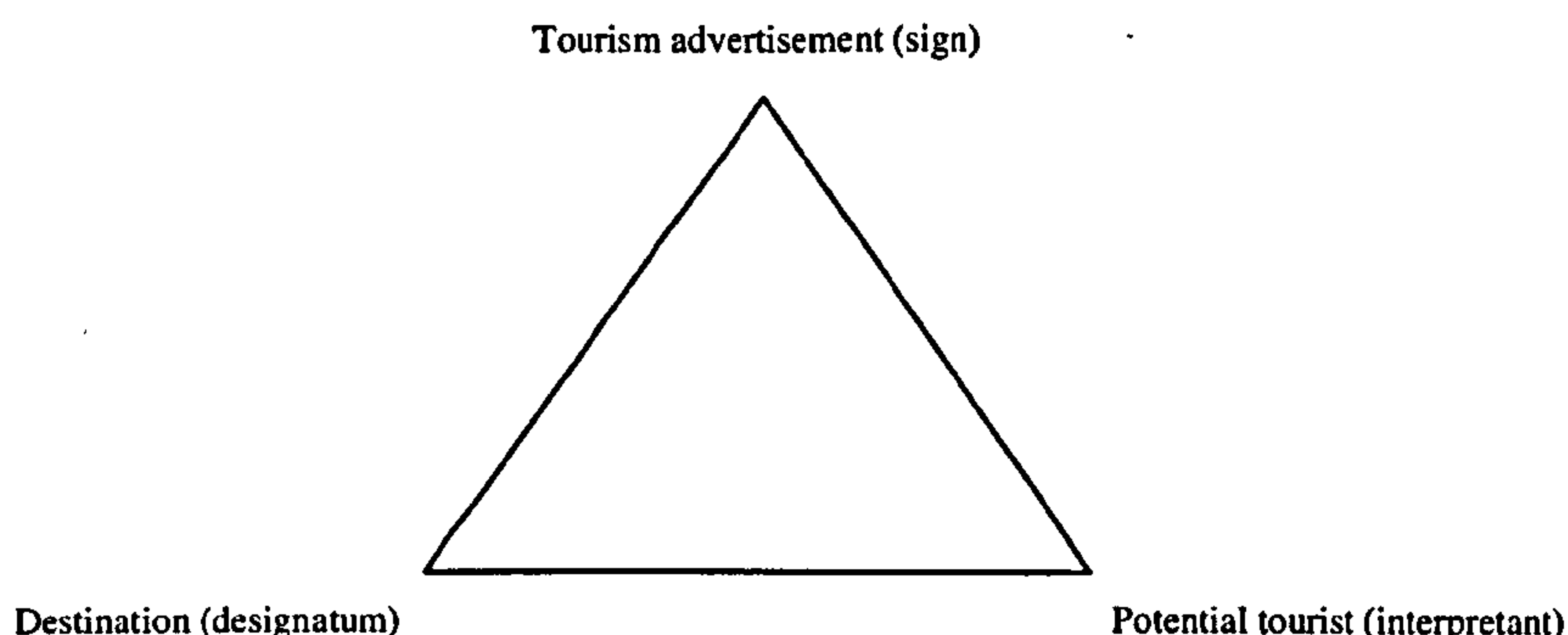
More recently, however, Gunn's theory has been challenged in terms of the terminology used to refer to these categories, and importantly it has been recognized that the distinction between induced and organic images is not as clearly defined as proposed by Gunn (Selby and Morgan, 1996; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). Gartner (1993) identified eight 'image agents', which function as a continuum in the image formation process and which act independently but also in conjunction with each other. The implications of this development are that the impact of individual factors on the received image cannot be easily determined (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Hughes and Allen, 2005). For example, the impact of tourism agencies' public relations activities on the news media, or the collaboration of tourist agencies and film makers and travel programmes result in a blurring of the distinction between the individual image agents. This then emphasizes the fact that place image is a complex entity and that its analysis is not a simple process.

### Tourism representations and the circuit of culture

The above discussion indicates that image represents a dynamic process, consisting of layers of meaning. Even in the absence of visitation, its structure and formation is influenced by various factors (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Therefore, analysis of projected images in themselves can reveal a lot about the socio-cultural and political background of the place being promoted. If we accept that language, in its broadest sense, is a key form of representation, a medium for the production of meaning and that culture relates to the exchange of meaning, then it is clear to see how the language of tourism is rooted in culture, and should therefore be considered in this context (Hall, 1997).

Further to this argument, it has been noted that tourism representations comprise a three-way relationship, and therefore for them to be fully understood, each of these relationships should be explored (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Echtner, 1999) (see Fig. 1). The first relationship (destination/tourism advertisement) represents how the place is represented by the advertiser; the second (tourism advertisement/potential tourist) indicates how the potential tourist perceives this representation; and finally, the third (potential tourist/

**Figure 1** The tourism semiotic triangle – a tourism marketing rendition (Echtner, 1999).



destination) corresponds to the symbolic consumption of the destination. This framework echoes Hall's (1997) argument that tourism images are embedded in a circuit of culture, which reflects and creates identities, resulting in a constant interchange of production and consumption of images. What we can draw from this is that a holistic approach to image analysis, which considers the relationship between the place, the producer and the consumer, is more valuable than a simple consideration of the explicit content of the image.

#### The semiotic vs. the discursive approach

Theories of representation and language can be useful in providing a further understanding of the production and consumption of place image. Hall (1997, p. 24) identifies the reflective, intentional and constructionist approaches to exploring the representation of meaning through language.

The reflective approach supposes that meaning can be found in the object, and that language directly reflects that meaning. Applied to the concept of place image, we can see how this theory is lacking because it is clear that there is no objective image of a place, given that the meaning of a place is subject to the interpretation imposed by the various agents responsible for projecting its image.

The intentional approach, which argues that the 'true' meaning is the intended meaning which the speaker or author imposes again, is flawed, because 'our private intended meanings, however, personal to us, have to *enter into the rules, codes and conventions of language* to be shared and understood.' (Hall, 1997, p. 25). In

other words, our intended messages need to take into account the language of the receiver. In the place promotion process, ideally, messages are modified according to the profile, tastes and demands of the potential consumer. Furthermore, the intentional approach dismisses the fact that the receiver interprets messages through his/her own world view.

The constructionist approach, on the other hand, recognizes that 'neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language ... It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others.' (Hall, 1997, p. 25). In relation to the production and consumption of place image, then, this implies that images projected by place marketing agencies draw on selected physical and conceptual elements associated with the place which will hopefully appeal to the potential consumer. The perceiver makes sense of the image according to his/her previous knowledge of the place and own personal and social characteristics, and thus does not necessarily accept the message intended by the place marketing organization. Therefore, place image represents a social construction; an amalgam of physical representations, situated in a framework of themes and socio-cultural values; a convergence of the conceptual and representational systems and values of the producer and consumer of the image.

Both the semiotic and discursive approaches to image analysis are largely based on the constructionist theory discussed above. Semiotics considers meaning and rep-

resentation through the understanding of language as a system of signs, whereas the discursive approach is concerned with the production of knowledge through language in its particular cultural or historical context (Hall, 1997). The constructionist approach was adopted by semioticians, such as Saussure and Pierce, who recognized that signs are composed of the interrelated elements of the signifier and the signified, and therefore that representations are constructed of layers of meaning. While the useful application of semiotics in destination image analysis has been recognized (Echtner, 1999), it is suggested that it is limited in that it fails to take into account the politics or impact of representations. In contrast, the discursive approach recognizes how a particular discourse can control knowledge and its impact (Foucault, 1980). Discourse can be both enabling and restrictive, in the sense that by defining a topic in a certain manner, it excludes other views, other relationships between the reader, the writer and the object. However, it is important to note that the 'power' of discourse is not governed by one element, but that it 'is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation', 'individuals . . . are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation.' (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). Regarding the texts of place image, then, we can apply Hall's (1997, p. 33) assertion that the 'reader' and the 'writer' play equal roles in the production of meaning. Furthermore, we can conclude that a discursive approach to analysing representations of place allows us to consider the socio-cultural and political relationships that lie beneath their surface and in particular the interplay of the voices of various image agents that impact on the overall image.

### Methodology

As proposed by Aitchison (1999, p. 29, in Pritchard and Morgan, 2001) 'space, place and landscape . . . are not fixed but are in a constant state of transition as a result of continuous, dialectical struggles of power and resistance among and between the diversity of landscape providers, users and mediators.' The following discussion therefore intends to argue the advantages of the discursive over the semiotic approach to analysis discussed above, in particular the benefit of deriving meaning from its broader context. Using the image of

Liverpool as an example, it will demonstrate, first, how projected image is formed by a complex and dynamic network of agents, and second, the implications for urban regeneration. Based on the premise that 'Meaning and representation seem to belong irrevocably to the interpretative side of the human and cultural sciences, whose subject matter – society, culture, the human subject – is not amenable to a positivistic approach . . .' (Hall, 1997, p. 42), the study used qualitative methods.

The data were drawn from a selection of promotional material, strategies and interviews with key informants from The Mersey Partnership, which acts as the tourist board for the region of Merseyside in general. Examples of promotional material were chosen to reflect the different markets targeted and the content of the images was analysed. The content of the tourism and marketing strategies was also analysed. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with key informants and were recorded for subsequent analysis. This provided a context for comparing references from the promotional material and the strategies. This triangulation of methods generated a number of common themes but also provided an insight into the image formation process, which would not have been possible had the images been analysed in isolation. The findings are discussed below.

### Place image and urban regeneration

After a period of industrial decline, Liverpool, like other cities (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996) is investing in tourism and its cultural heritage in order to bring about the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the city. The Mersey Partnership, and The Liverpool Culture Company, responsible for Liverpool's Capital of Culture 2008 campaign, along with other organizations, are striving to reconstruct the image of Liverpool. With the rising profile of Liverpool, this time as a place of consumption rather than of production, expectations of those consuming the city's urban landscape are potentially going to be higher than ever before. Consequently, it can be suggested that Liverpool's promotional bodies cannot afford to create expectations that they cannot meet, especially in light of the city's designation as Capital of Culture 2008 and its World Heritage Site status.

### Place image and the media

The power of the media in influencing place image is undisputed. Ashworth and Voogd (1990, p. 80) comment how cities attempting to market themselves are at a disadvantage, because they suffer from an 'antiurban bias' that is emphasized by the media. For those who are not particularly familiar with a certain place, media images often represent the 'objective' 'reality' (Avraham, 2000). Therefore, while promotional campaigns and events may be used to reposition a city, these may only serve to change certain aspects of the city's image, which is 'compartmentalized' in the mind of the individual (Paddison, 1993). The overall image, especially if that is negative, is difficult to change (Paddison, 1993; Selby, 2004, p. 25).

Liverpool, in particular, has suffered from negative representations in the press (Interview 1,<sup>1</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005). Promotional campaigns have been used to try and change this negative image. Figure 2 provides an example of how promotion is being used to subvert visitors' preconceptions of Merseyside as an area with a high crime rate. The image shows a padlock that is not locked and people sat outside at some kind of drinking or eating establishment. The implications are that there is no danger and that people are actually outside enjoying city life. The words 'Merseyside is one of the safest city regions' reinforce this message. On a deeper level however, the image is indicative of the interplay of discourses of different image agents. It is an attempt by Liverpool's place marketing organizations to subvert perceptions of the city as a dangerous place, held by the general public, fuelled by the media and originally instigated by not the whole, but a section of the city's population. As such the image is representative of the shifting power relations between the place, and the various producers and consumers of its image.

However, it is not just the pictorial representations of promotional material, but a range of promotional activities that are implemented to reconstruct the image of the city. Recent events such as the city's designation as European Capital of Culture 2008 and the awarding of World Heritage Site status have given rise

<sup>1</sup>Interview 1: Head of Tourism Sector Development, The Mersey Partnership (2005).



**Figure 2** National advertising campaign (The Mersey Partnership).

to more positive media coverage. The city has 'gone from getting very very negative press to getting a much more neutral press' (Interview 1,<sup>2</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005). While Liverpool's image alone is not monitored, it is reported that Merseyside's image score in general increased by 11% in 2004 (The Mersey Partnership, 2005) and there were 121 positive mentions in the media (The Mersey Partnership, 2004a). Attempts to influence the image portrayed by the media include public relations initiatives such as familiarization visits, where the media experience selective features of the city. Thus, again, we see the shifting nature of the distribution of power between various image agents – the media on the one hand, and the place marketing organization on the other. The above example however, demonstrates how the impact of individual image agents becomes increasingly difficult to ascertain, given that they are working together in favour of the city. So,

<sup>2</sup>Interview 1: Head of Tourism Sector Development, The Mersey Partnership (2005).

while Liverpool's image has not been totally transformed, marketing activities have assisted in improving its image. However, the ultimate aim is to achieve even more positive press coverage (Interview 1,<sup>3</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005).

### Image and the circle of growth

The influence of image has also been linked to the concept of the 'circle of growth' (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). The promotion of tourism theoretically attracts visitors, which in turn encourages investment and economic development, which reinforces a positive image and so the circle continues. Thus, image campaigns can be considered a crucial component of the circuit of culture, which reflect and reinforce power. Traditional industrial cities draw on their cultural heritage to position themselves as tourist destinations. However, this process seems to be extended even further. Suggestions that tourism destination brands are being positioned as place brands appear to be justified (Morgan *et al.*, 2002, p. 4), as image campaigns are now directed not only at potential visitors, but at potential investors and residents. Theoretically, the more attractive a place is seen to be, the more people will invest in it and the more the place will flourish.

This approach can be seen reflected in the promotional campaigns for Liverpool, which is marketed as 'A great place to invest, live, work and visit' (The Mersey Partnership, 2004b). The promotional message is exploited according to the market targeted. For example, on the one hand Liverpool is presented as a cultural centre to visitors (see Fig. 3), but on the other hand it is depicted as a thriving location in which to invest (see Fig. 2). It is implied that potential investors need not be deceived by preconceptions of Merseyside as an unsafe area, but should consider its cultural life and the opportunities this presents. If we analyse these images separately then they exist to convey the meanings described above. However, if we consider them in the wider context of promoting the city as 'A great place to invest, live, work and visit' then we can see how they are both

<sup>3</sup>Interview 1: Head of Tourism Sector Development, The Mersey Partnership (2005).



Figure 3 National advertising campaign (The Mersey Partnership).

related to the discourse of power relations within the 'circle of growth'. Image is used to entice investors and visitors into the city region with the hope that more will follow. Based on the 'circle of growth' (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996) theory, the more investors and visitors invest in the city, the more it will be perceived as an attractive location to visit and invest in.

However, the challenge for place marketers is to be able to promote an image distinctive enough to achieve a competitive advantage. The key to this is not just producing clever slogans, but actually selling an 'experience' (Morgan *et al.*, 2002, p. 5). Nevertheless, image projection alone does not equate with successful marketing; place marketers must also ensure that the place product meets expectations. Here, word-of-mouth plays a crucial role in the formation of place image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Numerous examples can be drawn from the case of Liverpool to indicate how the place product is being developed to ensure that a quality experience is provided. While the typical physical features of Liverpool's place product are being enhanced, considerable effort is currently being spent on improving customer service and co-ordinating the industry at all levels. An initiative known as 'The Liverpool Welcome' has been put in place to encourage all service providers to work together in providing quality customer service, by rewarding those who meet the mark, but penalizing those who don't. Furthermore, the product is being developed at a deeper level through collaboration with the education and training sector, who are

encouraged to promote tourism as a lucrative career and provide recruits with quality skills (Interviews 1 and 2,<sup>4</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005). The desired result is to enhance the image of the city by raising the standard of the tourism product and thus increase the chances of a satisfactory experience and recommendation. There are also stated social benefits such as the creation of employment opportunities. In practice, however, it appears that it is not so easy to convince local organizations of the benefits of training their employees, or to change perceptions that some local jobseekers have of the tourism and leisure industry.

'A lot of the local people who are unemployed don't want to work in the jobs... people's perception of the industry is that it's long hours, it's unsociable hours and it's poor pay.' (Interview 2,<sup>5</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005)

Here, we see how the 'circle of growth' does not merely depend on the efforts of the tourism industry but also on the wider community's co-operation. Therefore, going beyond mere pictorial representations aids our understanding of the underlying dynamics of place image formation.

#### Image and the promotion of culture

It has been noted that many cities' marketing strategies focus to a great extent on their cultural and heritage attractions (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Hughes and Allen, 2005). While an emphasis on culture can be beneficial in perpetuating the heritage of a place, it has been suggested that this is a strategy designed to attract the more affluent short break market (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). This also appears to be the case with the promotion of Liverpool (Interview 1,<sup>6</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005) (see Fig. 3). In this sense, the marketing

<sup>4</sup>Interview 1: Head of Tourism Sector Development, The Mersey Partnership (2005). Interview 2: Tourism Skills Development Manager, The Mersey Partnership (2005).

<sup>5</sup>Interview 2: Tourism Skills Development Manager, The Mersey Partnership (2005).

<sup>6</sup>Interview 1: Head of Tourism Sector Development, The Mersey Partnership (2005).

organization has control over the image of the city in choosing who they wish to attract. Higher-income groups are likely to spend more and thus boost the city's economy further and in turn the city's overall image. However, while an emphasis on culture may be of advantage in enhancing the image of a city, it can also be problematic for a number of reasons.

Foucault's (1980) arguments on the power of discourse are instructive here, for in choosing to represent certain features of a place's cultural heritage, others are immediately excluded. By highlighting distinctive attributes, images are taken out of context and thus become very standardized, and promoters risk projecting an image very similar to other cities (Hughes and Allen, 2005). Furthermore, images tend to be tailored to the expectations of tourists (Hughes and Allen, 2005), which also presents difficulties because residents and tourists tend to have different perceptions of the same place, but also different expectations and usage of its cultural facilities (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990, p. 80). The 'lived culture', which is likely to embody the images most residents hold, is unlikely to be represented in promotional campaigns, such as in the example used here (see Fig. 3). Therefore, it has to be asked, whose representation of the city is being portrayed? Finally, and possibly most importantly, it is argued that the images projected rarely bear any relevance to the lived reality of many residents, or take any account of the reality of social problems experienced by many city dwellers (Paddison, 1993; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996). The consumption of 'culture' is considered by many to be beyond their means or simply of no interest.

Nevertheless, in Liverpool, an initiative known as 'Creative Communities', part of the Capital of Culture campaign, aims at engaging the local community in the cultural life of the city through various projects (Interviews 1 and 2,<sup>7</sup> The Mersey Partnership, 2005). These projects aim to reverse the perceptions of some who see the Capital of Culture as only relevant to visitors or to those who are likely to reap the economic benefits. This is achieved in part by encouraging disadvantaged or under-represented groups of the community to par-

<sup>7</sup>Interview 1: Head of Tourism Sector Development, The Mersey Partnership (2005). Interview 2: Tourism Skills Development Manager, The Mersey Partnership (2005).



ticipate in projects that allow them to represent the city in a way meaningful to them and thus they become active agents in the production as well as the consumption of the city's image. However, while this initiative may be improving the city's image locally, it could be developed by drawing further on the diverse cultural dynamics of the city's population to promote the city externally. It appears that an emphasis on culture is contributing to the improved image projected outside the city, nonetheless, the approach appears to use isolated images of mainstream culture, which seem to dilute the unique character of the city. Were promotional activities to draw more on residents' experiences this could have the joint effect of encouraging the local population to co-operate in the promotion of the city and also of increasing the congruence between images projected to visitors and their actual experience of the city.

Finally, the above analysis of Liverpool's image and the dynamic context within which it is produced and consumed demonstrate the overall advantage of the discursive approach to image analysis. As meanings are cultural, images are better understood when placed in the socio-cultural context from which they derive.

### Conclusions and limitations

The above discussion intends to indicate how the discursive approach provides a more holistic framework for the analysis of place image, by acknowledging that representations are bound in a circuit of culture involving the object, author(s) and reader(s). It follows that the meaning of representations of place is not dictated by official image agents such as marketing organizations but is caught up in shifting power relations between various image agents including diverse groups of place consumers such as visitors or residents, who often represent conflicting discourses. While marketing organizations are able to influence place image by targeting certain groups and by choosing which elements of the city to promote, their impact is difficult to ascertain when they work in conjunction with other agents or when other agents are working against them. Furthermore, as public perceptions and values often inform the overall image, the consumer of the image also becomes involved in the image formation process.

Drawing on examples from the case of Liverpool highlights these points further. Promotional images but also a range of other marketing activities are being implemented in an attempt to subvert negative perceptions. Public relations activities in particular appear to be getting the media on side. Furthermore, a connection can be drawn between the city's tourism marketing activities and the 'circle of growth' concept. Various initiatives are in place to ensure that the product is not only promoted but developed at every level in order to ensure visitors' satisfaction and thus the potential of attracting further visitors and investors. Moreover, Liverpool appears to be using its cultural assets to promote tourism. However, the images used are not particularly resonant of the unique character of the city. It is suggested that using the diverse cultural dynamics of the city's population to promote the city could reduce the risk of consumers' pre-visit image not matching the reality of their experience and could also encourage the participation of the local community in the city's cultural life, which could in turn address some of the negative issues affecting the image of the city. So, while there is some indication of the changing identity of the city, to what extent this can be sustained and to whom this applies remains to be seen.

Since so far only one element of the tourism relationship has been officially examined, that is the relationship between the destination and how it is represented by the various image agents, the conclusions that can be drawn are limited. On the surface it seems that the city is changing, however, it remains to actually engage with residents and visitors to the city in order to determine what image they hold of the city.

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# **STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO CULTURE, TOURISM AND REGENERATION IN LIVERPOOL**

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## **Introduction**

As the links between culture, tourism and regeneration are becoming widely recognised, a number of European cities, such as Glasgow and Barcelona (Garcia, 2004), have now adopted cultural and tourism strategies as part of their urban renewal policy. The regeneration of urban areas in particular is especially significant because previously many of them have been considered to be dirty and dangerous places that nobody wants to visit. However, the increasing desirability of cities as places to live in and visit is reflected in the growing trends of urban tourism and city centre living. The potential benefits of culture and tourism for regeneration are that culture can be promoted as a unique asset to attract tourists but also to engender pride among residents and encourage them to participate in the cultural life of the city. Tourism, in turn, can help to benefit the economy and revitalise the city through social activity. However, tensions between cultural policy as a driver for economic regeneration on the one hand, and as a facilitator of sustained cultural expression on the other, highlight one of the key issues surrounding current cultural regeneration initiatives. This matter has been discussed in relation to Glasgow (*ibid.*) and also Liverpool (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). Liverpool, in light of its status as European Capital of Culture 2008 in particular, represents a prime case through which to examine the implementation of cultural and tourism strategies and their role in regeneration.

The aim of this paper is, firstly, to present and analyse some of the strategies and key documents relating to Liverpool's tourism and cultural industries; secondly, to discuss some of the research which has already been carried out in relation to culture and tourism in Liverpool; and, finally, to consider the implications of these studies and strategies for future research and cultural and tourism policy making in the City. It will therefore refer to the scope of the strategies, the partnership and collaboration involved in implementing them and the extent to which issues addressed within them are actually engaged with.

### **A brief look at Liverpool's past**

No attempt is made here to summarise the history of Liverpool [detailed accounts are provided by, for example, Belchem (2006) and Munck (2003)]. But, to set the scene, it may be useful to mention a few points of reference. The year 2007 marked Liverpool's 800<sup>th</sup> birthday, in other words, 800 years since Liverpool was awarded its Royal Charter by King John. Growing from a small fishing village to an influential port at the centre of the global economy, to a city suffering severe economic and social decline, to its current state as a city in the throes of regeneration, Liverpool is a city that has seen radical change.

The port has been crucial to the history of Liverpool, not only in economic terms but also in social and cultural terms. It was through the port of Liverpool that the City influenced and was influenced both socially and culturally. The social influence of the port is still evident today, reflected, for example, in the ethnic diversity of Liverpool's population. The history of the port, however, particularly the wealth that was created on the back of the slave trade, is not necessarily a source of pride. In their defence, though, some Liverpool citizens also fought for the abolition of the slave trade. In cultural terms, Liverpool's port was responsible for a variety of influences. The 2007 Souled Out Films production 'Liverpool's Cunard Yanks' documents how Liverpool became the stage for a cultural revolution, through cultural imports that merchant seamen brought back from New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This puts the often overstated influence of the Beatles in perspective.

The port, however, has not always been a symbol of prosperity for the city of Liverpool. From the late 1960s Liverpool failed to rise to the demands of containerisation, shifting trade routes and modes of transport (Milne, 2006: p. 264; Murden, 2006: p. 429), resulting in severe decline of the port area and mass unemployment. However, the port today still functions, albeit not in the same location. The majority of dock activity moved further down the River to Seaforth when the headquarters of the local port authority, Mersey Docks and Harbour Company,

relocated from the Port of Liverpool building to Seaforth Dock. Ironically, in terms of the amount of cargo handled, the port is busier today than ever before, however, due to labour-saving production devices, it operates with only a fraction of the workforce (Meegan, 2003: p. 68). Nonetheless, while mass unemployment clearly exacerbated social problems in the City, driving levels of deprivation higher and dampening spirits, its impact was not purely negative. The adverse social conditions in Liverpool would later constitute a source of inspiration for artists like the playwright Alan Bleasdale and writer Carla Lane whose work constituted a social commentary of the City but with a humorous twist. This resilience in the face of adversity is said to be characteristic of the people of Liverpool (Murden, 2006: pp. 464-466).

The above are just a few examples of the past significance of the port and its impact on the culture of Liverpool today. Other industrial activity in the City, however, has also markedly shaped the nature of Liverpool and its people. The manufacturing industry in Liverpool suffered from national and international recession in the 1970s, resulting in the closure of numerous factories in the Liverpool area in particular. This, of course, precipitated the decline of the City's economy. Unemployment rose and the population fell as people left in search of better fortunes (Murden, 2006: pp. 428-429).

The 1980s were particularly challenging and notorious years in the history of Liverpool. Reactions to adverse social conditions of exclusion, deprivation and discrimination were contributing factors to the Toxteth riots in 1981. The negative image of Liverpool was intensified by a history of industrial action and militant politics. Stigmatised by these events, Liverpool's chances of economic revival were bleak. Despite these unfortunate events, the 1980s in Liverpool did have its highlights. Attempts at cultural regeneration included the development of derelict land in the Dingle area to provide a site for the International Garden Festival in 1984. At this time also, the Albert Dock and its warehouses were transformed into retail, office and residential space. These initiatives were instigated by the Merseyside Development Corporation as part of a new tourism and leisure based regeneration strategy. However, despite the success of these schemes in terms of generating visitors and revenue for the City, they were criticised for excluding the local authority and for failing to resolve crucial issues such as the deprivation of many communities (Murden, 2006: p. 445-447).

With the port and manufacturing now playing a lesser role in the City's economy, it is the leisure and cultural industries that account for the most significant economic activity in the new millennium (Liverpool City Council, 2002). At present, the dynamics of the City are constantly shifting as new strategies, proposals, projects, and organisations come into being, each with their own agenda to shape the City in some way.

At the moment, when the City is changing on a daily basis, keeping track of every project, policy or decision presents quite a challenge. Certainly there has been some contention as change promises to be 'for the good of the city', while there are often negative implications for certain groups and individuals. In this respect, it is important to remember that despite the momentum that is gathering and pointing towards a reversal of the City's fortunes, Liverpool still remains the most deprived council area in England (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 12; Impacts 08, 2007: p. 25; Wilks-Heeg, 2003: p. 50). As a result of its levels of deprivation, Liverpool has received substantial support through various schemes. Recently £840 million of European funding was awarded through the Merseyside Objective One programme 2000-2006, in order to aid the area's economy, as part of a £2 billion regeneration programme (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 25). This was the second round of funding awarded through this initiative, the first round being granted for the period 1994-2000. However, low income levels in Liverpool restrict the extent to which this consumer economy can grow, and therefore visitors are needed to sustain economic activity in the City (Meegan, 2003: pp. 72-74).

### **The regeneration of Liverpool?**

The last decade in particular has brought some significant developments for Liverpool. The City currently holds the title of European Capital of Culture 2008. Furthermore, in 2004 Liverpool was given the inscription of 'Liverpool—Maritime Mercantile City' with various parts of the City being designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in view of their historic significance to the City's past as a commercial port and their relevance in terms of global heritage, based on their role in "the growth of world trade, mercantile culture, the trans-atlantic slave trade and mass European emigration" (Liverpool City Council, n.d.). These achievements obviously represent huge potential in terms of regenerating Liverpool.

However, public sector intervention prior to these accolades has been given credit for paving the way for private sector developers to invest in Liverpool (Meegan, 2003: p. 66). Much of this development has been based on old industrial sites and office buildings converted into residential space, and forms part of a targeted campaign to bring people, preferably young, affluent professionals, back into the City Centre (Munck, 2003: p. 7). For years, Liverpool City Centre was not considered a desirable residential location, and between 1971 and 1991 the population dropped from 3,600 to 2,340. However the City Centre population in 2001 stood at 8,648 and was estimated to reach 14,000 in 2006 (Liverpool City Council, 2004). In 2005, Liverpool's population as a whole

was said to be increasing for the first time since the 1930s (Liverpool City Council, 2005; 2006b). While the 2005 estimate of 447,500 did indicate an increase on the 2001 census figures which recorded Liverpool's population as 439,473 (Liverpool City Council, 2006a: p. 1; 2006b), the estimate of 436,100 for 2006 raises questions about population growth in Liverpool (Liverpool City Council, 2008). The population increase in the City Centre does appear to mirror the trend of City Centre living. However, while developers continue to fill the City Centre with luxury apartments, the indications are that this market has now reached saturation and apartments are lying empty. The family market, however, is struggling to find housing in the City Centre, which raises concerns about the sustainability of housing schemes in the City Centre and the ensuing consequences for the City Centre community (*Liverpool Daily Post*, 24 April 2007).

Currently, talk of Liverpool's renaissance is often associated with the City's status as European Capital of Culture 2008 (Impacts 08, 2007: p. 74-5). Over the last few years there has been a particular emphasis on investment in the physical infrastructure of the City. The document 'Regeneration & Development in Liverpool City Centre 1995-2004' (marketing@liverpool, 2004), gives some indication of the extent of the physical regeneration of the City Centre in the latter half of the 1990s and first half of this decade. It outlines an impressive range of developments for commercial, retail, residential, academic and leisure use. However, it also demonstrates that the focus on improving the City's physical infrastructure had begun prior to Liverpool bidding for European Capital of Culture. While winning the European Capital of Culture bid may have acted as a catalyst for some of the current physical development, this work had also predominantly been planned in advance of and independently from the bid. However, many schemes were actually referred to in the bid, and thirty of these were pinpointed as key to the delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme. Sixteen had been completed by the end of 2006 (Impacts 08, 2007: p. 75). The majority of these projects, twenty out of thirty, are based in the City Centre. The Big Dig, a major regeneration project of £3 billion, encompasses some of these projects, including the City Centre Movement Strategy, a scheme aimed at upgrading the City Centre's streets and public spaces. Other City Centre initiatives include Liverpool City Central BID (Business Improvement District) which encompasses 500 businesses in the core retail area of the City Centre and aims to "provide a safe, clean, attractive, and well promoted distinctive trading area within the City Centre" (marketing@liverpool, 2005: p. 1). Much of this development has been overseen by Liverpool Vision, a regeneration company specifically focusing on Liverpool City Centre and one of the

first regeneration companies in the country to be based on public/private partnership.

However, the concentration of development in the City Centre has fuelled the criticism that not enough is being invested in the inner city and suburbs of Liverpool. While the heart of the City needs to be brought back to life, a balance needs to be struck between regenerating the City Centre and investing in the inner city and suburbs, since it appears that currently the reach of this regeneration is restricted, both in geographical and social terms. However, this is not a problem which relates to Liverpool only, but is a phenomenon of many British cities (Evans, 2003: p. 26). Nonetheless, if it is the case that Liverpool remains the most deprived city in England, then perhaps there is a greater case for this imbalance to be redressed.

## **Cultural policy**

### **The value of culture**

Culture has been identified as essential to the city (Munck, 2003: p. 13). However, for Liverpool, culture has taken on a particularly significant role as a tool for economic, social and environmental regeneration. In previous decades, cultural policy was not focused on to such an extent and any attempts at devising cultural strategies were not so successful. However, since the beginning of this decade, creative activity, leisure and retail have featured as the core elements of the City's regeneration programme (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: p. 347). The convergence of the once separate spheres of culture and economics, and in particular the increasing use of cultural strategies to drive the economy of cities, has been widely commented on (Avery, 2000; Richards, 1996). This observation is especially relevant to Liverpool, which has invested more in culture than any other major city (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 22; Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a: p. 9). Liverpool City Council now contributes £33 million to the City's leisure and cultural provision (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 32). £2 billion has been set aside for investment in Liverpool's cultural sector over the next few years, £1 billion of this public funding and another £1 billion private (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 6). The cultural and leisure industries account for more than 15,000 jobs (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 5), with a predicted further 14,000 jobs to be created in the cultural sector<sup>1</sup> in Liverpool by 2012 (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 6).

In 1999, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport suggested that all local authorities should devise a Local Cultural Strategy by 2002, and issued guidance on how this should be approached (DCMS, 1999;



2000). The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool (Liverpool City Council, 2002) follows this guidance quite closely. Liverpool's strategy highlights the significance of culture for Liverpool as "a place to live", "a place to work", and "a place to visit". It states that culture will be used to attract and retain people in Liverpool through its cultural offer and the quality of life which cultural activity can provide (*ibid.*: p. 24). More specifically, an emphasis on culture will provide residents with greater access to cultural activity and therefore a better quality of life; it will create increased job opportunities; and will encourage investment as an international visitor destination which delivers high quality cultural experiences (*ibid.*: pp. 2-3).

The scope of the Cultural Strategy for Liverpool (*ibid.*: p. 5) defines culture quite broadly as:

- built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology
- children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- informal leisure pursuits, entertainment and food
- libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- media, film, television, video and language
- museums, artifacts, archives and design
- parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation
- performing and visual arts, craft and fashion
- sports, events facilities and development
- tourism, festivals and attractions

The above indicate the material and overt expressions of culture. However, the strategy also acknowledges the notion of lived culture, as indicated in the list below:

- relationships
- shared memories, experiences and identity
- diverse cultural, religious and historical backgrounds
- standards
- what we consider valuable to pass onto future generations.

This draws closely on the model presented by DCMS (1999: p. 9; 2000: p. 7). However, while employing set formats can produce effective results, there are also dangers inherent in following these too closely, such as the standardisation of the cultural offer. On the other hand, the local cultural strategy offers a level of autonomy over cultural development, which local authorities did not previously possess, therefore allowing for the diversification of cultural strategy.

The cultural strategy for Liverpool adopts a thematic approach, as proposed by DCMS (1999: p. 7; 2000: p. 36). Three main supporting

themes have been devised as guidelines for the strategy. These are:

- Create, innovate and sustain
- Participate, include and engage
- Regenerate, improve and renew

and are expected to achieve the following respective cultural outcomes (Liverpool City Council, 2002: pp. 71-74):

- A sustainable cultural infrastructure
- An inclusive and dynamic community
- A premier European City.

These are the same as the desired outcomes that the City aims to achieve as European Capital of Culture (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 8). While it is a positive sign that the principal cultural policy makers share the same vision and aims, there is an indication here that much of Liverpool's cultural policy is dependent on its European Capital of Culture status (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 30).

Culture and cultural policy is particularly crucial in 2008 since the City holds the European Capital of Culture title for this year. Originally set up to manage the bid, and subsequently responsible for managing and delivering Liverpool's European Capital of Culture programme, Liverpool Culture Company played a key role in organising the City's cultural activity. The Company's vision "is to deliver the best ever European Capital of Culture in 2008 and to leave an enduring legacy for the people of Liverpool" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 18). The Company's objectives are:

- To create and present the best of local, national and international art and events in all genres
- To build community enthusiasm, creativity and participation
- To maintain, enhance and grow the cultural infrastructure of the city
- To increase the levels of visitors and inward investment in the city
- To reposition Liverpool as a world class city by 2008
- To provide efficient and effective management of the Liverpool Culture Company Programme. (*ibid.*)

However, since regeneration projects are taking place in the City independently from Liverpool Culture Company's initiatives, to what extent any outcomes associated with these objectives could be wholly attributable to the European Capital of Culture programme is debatable.

Impacts 08, a research project run by Liverpool University and Liverpool John Moores University, and commissioned by Liverpool City

Council, has the aim, in fact, of evaluating the social, cultural, economic and environmental effects of Liverpool's hosting the European Capital of Culture title in 2008. 'The Baseline Report' (Impacts 08, 2007), disseminates the preliminary findings of the longitudinal study, which starts from the pre-bid phase in 2000 and ends in 2009/10. The research carried out so far is structured around six main themes, based on Liverpool Culture Company's six objectives. Importantly, the report highlights the need to disaggregate the effects of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture status from developments which are taking place anyway. Failure to do this would produce an imprecise measure of the impacts of the European Capital of Culture programme.

#### Partnership and collaboration

Above, the main principles and scope of Liverpool's cultural policy have been laid out. However, for this policy to be successfully implemented depends not only on the vision and actions of its authors, but also on the cooperation of other organizations which comprise the cultural infrastructure.

Liverpool's cultural system appears to be built on a significant level of partnership and collaboration. The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool is set within a national and regional context and highlights how it shares the vision and aims of other bodies within this wider geographical framework (Liverpool City Council, 2002: pp. 8-23). Particular attention is given to the relationship between Liverpool and Manchester as the region's two core cities and how they aim to establish both healthy competition and synergy between each other (*ibid.*: pp. 14-22). On a local level, Liverpool City Council and its partners, in particular, the Liverpool Partnership Group and Liverpool Culture Company seem to be in accordance with each other concerning the vision for the City, to become "a premier European City" (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 26; Liverpool Partnership Group, 2002: p. 1) or "world class city" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 18). There is also a certain amount of collaboration between the public and private sector, especially as far as the Capital of Culture programme is concerned. In strategic terms, this is considered to be crucial by Liverpool Culture Company (*ibid.*: p. 20). However, despite this sense of cultural leadership coming from within local government, a number of disputes have arisen and been highlighted by the media, thus undermining confidence in the City's leaders (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 36).

#### Liverpool's cultural offer

Also extremely significant to the success of the City's cultural policy is the scope and quality of the cultural offer. Liverpool has a wide-ranging cultural offer which, according to the Impacts 08 programme,

is perceived on the whole to be good (Impacts08, 2007: pp. 38-41). However, this evaluation doesn't take into account the perceptions of residents. The overall assessment of the City's Cultural and Leisure Services is also rated as good (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 7). Liverpool's cultural attractions include one of the largest national collections of museums and galleries outside London, collectively known as National Museums Liverpool, which is currently expanding. Also in the museums and galleries sector are Tate Liverpool and a number of less renowned but equally interesting independent galleries and art spaces. Music, theatre, architecture and sport also form part of Liverpool's wide ranging cultural offer. However, it has been argued that Liverpool's cultural offer is too narrowly framed by "nostalgia, traditionalism and yesterday's successes" (Ben-Tovim, 2003: p. 236). This appears to be a valid point as there is a considerable amount of more innovative cultural activity which currently appears to be under-promoted and unrecognised. While there has been huge publicity concerning large scale regeneration projects such as Liverpool One, the new City Centre retail and leisure development, there has been very little reference to the opening of less mainstream initiatives. In Autumn 2006, A Foundation launched its Greenland Street venture, based on three former industrial warehouses, now transformed into three gallery spaces known as The Coach Shed, The Furnace and The Blade Factory; in May 2006, The Picket, a live music venue, found a new home in Jamaica Street, after closing due to debt; and Novas recently opened its Contemporary Urban Centre, featuring entertainment, gallery, cinema, conference, retail and office space. All of these initiatives are located in a new cultural quarter on the edge of the City Centre, known as the 'Independent District', and it is these kinds of places that will give Liverpool its edge, that 'something a bit different'. However, with the lack of promotion, it is likely that only a limited amount of people are aware of their existence.

On the other hand, Liverpool also has a growing events calendar including Mersey River Festival, Mathew Street Festival, Summer Pops, Africa Oyé, Brouhaha, DaDa Fest, Homotopia, Arabic Arts Festival, Liverpool Irish Festival, Liverpool Biennial, Hub and Leap, which better reflect the City's diverse cultures. Of course, Liverpool's European Capital of Culture year can also be seen as an event in itself. So far, criticism has been cast concerning a sense of lack of participation and involvement in relation to Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme. However, in relation to other Capitals/Cities of Culture, Liverpool had already delivered a considerable number of cultural projects before 2008, its year as Capital of Culture (Impacts 08, 2007: p. 47). Unique to Liverpool's programme, a number of themed years have been designated in order to create awareness and momentum, to encourage

participation in 2008, but also to create a lasting legacy after 2008 (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 10):

2003	Year of Learning
2004	Faith in One City
2005	Sea Liverpool
2006	Liverpool Performs
2007	800th birthday
2008	European Capital of Culture
2009	Environment
2010	Innovation

Collaboration with the cultural sector is recognised as crucial to these themed years (*ibid.*: p. 20), and as such the City's cultural organisations are encouraged to develop activity in line with the relevant theme for each year.

### **Social inclusion and community participation**

Much of Liverpool's cultural policy emphatically refers to notions of social inclusion and community participation. The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool claims to be "fundamentally inclusive" (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 2) and Liverpool Culture Company maintains that "Liverpool places community participation at the heart of its planning for European Capital of Culture" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 21). This emphasis on people rather than physical infrastructure is said to be driven by a belief in "Liverpool's strongest asset" – its people (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a: p. 9). Definitions of 'an inclusive community' appear to focus predominantly on representing ethnic diversity (Liverpool City Council, 2002: pp. 56-57), although other excluded groups are briefly mentioned (*ibid.*: p. 59). While ethnic diversity is a defining feature of Liverpool's culture, the harsh reality of some members of the ethnic minorities living in the City is not duly acknowledged. Despite the longstanding ethnic diversity of Liverpool's population, the extent of racial segregation is possibly among the greatest in UK cities (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: p. 352). Although it is recognised that "these communities have been accepted by the city to differing degrees", the problem is then reduced to the fact that "the rich cultural heritages and the contemporary expression of these heritages has not been successfully recognized or celebrated" (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 56). However, the cultural diversity which is to be celebrated is that which results "from 800 years as a world-facing port" (*ibid.*: p. 72). As such, suggestions that promotional literature referring to Liverpool's European

Capital of Culture status portray a romanticized view of Liverpool as 'The World In One City', based on a tokenistic representation of the City's ethnic minorities (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: pp. 352-353), seem quite justified. Moreover, this nostalgic view of how Liverpool's culture was formed is not necessarily culturally relevant today. First, it ignores the level of diversity due to other factors which have more recently shaped the City, such as the influx of refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, it does not recognise the fact that Liverpool now has one of the lowest levels of ethnic diversity of any English city (Pooley, 2006: p. 187).

Despite the rather simplistic representation of excluded communities in some of the key cultural policy documents such as 'The Cultural Strategy for Liverpool' (Liverpool City Council, 2002: pp. 56-59) and 'Liverpool Culture Company: Strategic business plan 2005-2009' (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 21), there are initiatives which are actively working to create a culture of social inclusion in the City. Furthermore, the evaluation of Liverpool's Cultural Services indicates that opportunities to participate in cultural activity are improving (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 28). The Creative Communities programme is part of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture project and is considered to be "crucial in making sure that the promise of 'inclusive community participation' which helped the bid is now fully delivered" (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a: p. 11). The programme claims to tackle the roots of isolation and ignorance by reaching out to excluded communities which have previously been hard to approach and demonstrating that culture is "a right for all", not just "a middle class luxury" (*ibid.*: p. 19). However, it is also recognised that the resources which are facilitating this initiative are not endless and therefore there is a need to ensure that this creative engagement is continued in a sustainable manner (*ibid.*: p. 27). Of course, the Creative Communities programme is not the first initiative to use culture and creativity as a tool for regeneration. There are other organisations in the City which have been working in this way for some time.

As far as levels of interest in and engagement with culture in Liverpool are concerned, these are reported to be in line with those in the rest of the United Kingdom (Impacts 08, 2007: p. 47). However, a greater proportion of the audiences attending the larger cultural organisations in the City are from outside of Liverpool (*ibid.*: p. 53). Events supported by the Creative Communities programme reflect an over representation of ethnic minorities and youths both in terms of participants and audience (*ibid.*: p. 49). While this is clearly an excellent achievement considering these are regarded as priority groups (Audit Commission, 2006: p. 21), it is also an indication that the programme might be biased towards organisations such as schools due to ease of access in terms of having a 'captive audience' (Impacts 08, 2007: p. 50). Nonetheless,

it is difficult to ascertain the actual extent of engagement in cultural activity since many organisations do not monitor the profile of their audiences (*ibid.*: p. 50-52).

Reports from other organisations suggest that social exclusion is still a problem in the City. Research carried out by Novas (2003) demonstrated that respondents from Liverpool's Black and Minority Ethnic communities felt that there were a number of access issues which prevented them from becoming involved in cultural activities (*ibid.*: pp. 69-72). While this research took place before the Creative Communities programme, which appears to be engaging Liverpool's BME communities to some extent, other more recent research confirms that there is an under representation of BME groups engaged in activity through the mainstream cultural organisations (Impacts 08, 2007: p. 51). However, the case of BME groups is just one example of excluded communities. There is a need to consider the issue of social inclusion and regeneration from various perspectives. Munck (2003) discusses this matter in relation to Liverpool from the view point of race, gender, and age; however, socio-economic status, sexuality and physical/mental ability should also be taken into consideration.

### Capitalising on Culture?

In light of these arguments, and despite claims that culture has predominantly been adopted as a vehicle for social reform, doubt has been cast as to whether the economic benefits are not what the City truly has at heart. Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004: pp. 350-351) suggest that the benefits of community cohesion which allegedly won the bid for Liverpool, and are repeatedly cited as core objectives of the programme, are being glazed-over in favour of the economic impact that the European Capital of Culture title could have on the City. A key piece of their evidence is based on the report commissioned before the bid was won by Liverpool City Council (ERM Economics, 2003) to assess the socio-economic impact of a successful bid. The report clearly states that "the primary focus of the commission was on assessing the economic impact that a successful Capital of Culture could make to the city, Merseyside and the North West region" (*ibid.*: p. 1). It does seem, on studying this allegation further, that many of the benefits of culture-led regeneration are expressed in economic terms, such as an increase in investment, jobs, and visitor numbers (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b: p. 5). Therefore, tensions "between the elite conception of cultural policy as a tool for economic growth and cultural policy as an expression of grassroots and community-based activity" (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: p. 343) or between the "large scale 'wow-factor' events and the need to tackle the multiple causes of deprivation" (Audit Commission, 2006: p.

35) clearly exist. Furthermore, while the use of culture in re-branding Liverpool may have made the City a more attractive environment to be in, it is suggested that these efforts put the needs of investors and tourists, who are more likely to add to the economy of the City, over and above those of residents. Moreover, the capitalisation of culture and regulation of cultural spaces in the City actually pose a threat to more spontaneous and diverse expressions of culture, thus redefining the Culture of the City as a whole (Belchem, 2006: p. 56; Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004: p. 343).

## **Tourism Policy**

### **The development of tourism in Liverpool**

With both culture and tourism increasingly featuring on Liverpool's regeneration agenda, it is interesting to consider how they are linked and the potential issues which arise from this partnership. While the previous sections addressed some of the issues surrounding Liverpool's cultural policy, the rest of the paper will focus on the City's tourism policy. Tourism appears increasingly as a feature of Liverpool's regeneration strategies, with the key tourism bodies in the City aiming to "increase the economic, social and environmental benefits of tourism to the Liverpool City Region and to improve the profitability of tourism businesses" (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 5). This aim is set within the context of the promotion of the Liverpool City Region as "a great place to invest, live, work and visit" (*ibid*: p. 2) and is based on the principles of the virtuous circle of tourism (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 6). While 20 or 30 years ago Liverpool might have been the last place anyone would want to visit, tourism is currently at an all time high, with the international market showing the greatest growth (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 7; 2006a: p. 11). In 2003, Liverpool moved from 18<sup>th</sup> place to 9<sup>th</sup> in the Top UK Towns visited by international visitors, although it moved down to 16<sup>th</sup> place in 2004 (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a:p. 11). Domestic tourism, although it has not seen such a rapid increase, has now also reached a high (The Mersey Partnership, p. 2006a: p. 11). According to research carried out in 2004, Merseyside attracted 3.82 million staying visitors, generating £414 million (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: p. 11). The total number of visitors is estimated at over 10 million (Liverpool City Council, 2002: p. 42). The vision for tourism in 2015 is for the Liverpool City Region to be ranked in the top 20 European City Region Destinations, generating an annual visitor spend of £2 billion and 30,000 local jobs (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: p. 8).



### Partnerships and collaboration

It has been suggested that the fragmented nature of the tourism industry requires effective coordination and close collaboration in order to produce a quality tourism product (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000: p. 138; Page, 1995: p. 213). Liverpool's tourism industry appears to be built on a significant number of partnerships and a considerable amount of collaboration. In a regional, that is Northwest, context Liverpool has been designated as an 'attack brand' in a wider strategy to attract visitors to the Northwest of England (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 4; p. 26; NWDA, 2007: p. 15). Interestingly, the Northwest as a whole sees itself as "underperforming" in tourism (NWDA, 2007: p. 5), whereas the impression given of tourism in Liverpool is more positive. On a local level, however, Liverpool is defined as the attack brand, used to promote Merseyside in general (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 21). This collaboration, based on an 'attack and disperse strategy', is also evident in promotional literature. For example, the visitor guide for Liverpool is actually the 'Visitor Guide to Liverpool, Merseyside & England's Northwest' and as such includes information on other locations in Merseyside and the North West (The Mersey Partnership, 2005b; 2006b). Other examples of this kind of regional and local collaboration include the designation of the Mersey Waterfront as "a regional signature project" aimed at linking the waterfront through the districts of Halton, Liverpool, Wirral and Sefton (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 8; NWDA, 2007: p. 14).

While in some cases the partner organisations seem to share common aims and objectives and a certain level of cooperation, there do appear, however, to be certain conflicts of interest. By way of example, the Northwest tourism strategy places emphasis on the importance of sustainable tourism, especially in relation to the environment, which implies limiting the amount of air travel (NWDA, 2007: p. 9). It is stated that "the majority of promotional effort will be within the UK market. This is consistent with the national strategy of promoting domestic tourism, benefiting both balance of payments and the carbon footprint" (*ibid.*: p. 15). However, for Liverpool, with Liverpool John Lennon Airport constantly expanding and with promotional campaigns increasingly focused on the international market, air travel is clearly significant to the tourism infrastructure of the City.

On a local level, coordination of the tourism industry is currently managed predominantly by two organisations, The Mersey Partnership and Liverpool Culture Company. The Mersey Partnership defines the importance of its role as follows:

- As a sub-regional public-private sector partnership, it brings to the table the leading players involved in tourism across the Liverpool City Region.
- As a sub-regional partner to the Northwest Development Agency, it can ensure that the Liverpool City Region tourism product is aligned to regional priorities and programmes.
- As the tourism marketing, investment and economic development agency for the Liverpool City Region, it is responsible for the branding and messaging about the sub-region.
- As a contributor to the Merseyside Objective One programme it can help align investment to the priorities outlined in this strategy. (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 29)

In its role as local tourism board, The Mersey Partnership states,

In pursuing the development of the targeted visitor experiences, tourism partners will adhere to some guiding principles which underpin the visitor experience and ensure tourism contributes to the wider economic development agenda of the sub-region. Similarly, there is a need to strengthen the tourism component of wider infrastructure developments in the sub-region. (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 14)

Tourism and conference activity is controlled to a certain extent through The Mersey Partnership's membership scheme, which offers its members the advantages of promotion and advertising, training and so on. Such membership schemes are useful in terms of coordinating activity and ensuring quality standards, however, this also implies that smaller organisations may not have the budget to join or may fall short of qualifying for membership based on other criteria. Also, The Mersey Partnership's remit stretches further than the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Liverpool to the whole Merseyside region. While being beneficial in the sense that this encourages cooperation on a sub-regional level, problems could also arise in terms of marketing. The strategy claims that it is not bound by the political boundaries of local authorities (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 21), but since Liverpool has a much higher brand awareness than Merseyside and since the composite districts may have different needs and priorities, this could indeed lead to some contention. The Destination Management Plan, on this point, highlights the fact that:

Merseyside is not a homogenous destination — it has two clear tourism destination brands, Liverpool and Southport, and many other products and assets that combine to make up the Mersey-

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side tourism offer with individual strengths and issues to address. (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 8)

Liverpool Culture Company, as discussed earlier, is responsible for the City's European Capital of Culture programme. That tourism in Liverpool will benefit from this designation is undisputed (Impacts 08, 2007: pp. 21-22). However, evidence that publicity in the national press has not referred to Liverpool's increasing appeal to tourist and conference markets in light of its European Capital of Culture status (*ibid.*: p. 68) is perhaps suggestive of a lack of tourism promotion for Liverpool at national level. This is also slightly concerning considering the intention of Liverpool Culture Company to reposition Liverpool through an increase in leisure and business tourism. It is also quite concerning that much of Liverpool's tourism planning is now focused around this designation, as the Destination Management Plan clearly states, "The Strategic Objectives for this Destination Management Plan ... are built around Liverpool's designation as European Capital of Culture in 2008 and the opportunities and challenges this provides over the next four years."

There are four key strategic objectives:

- To develop a class destination for conferences and business visits
- To promote the Liverpool City Region as a world-class destination for leisure tourism
- To develop the sub-region as a major events destination of international repute
- To deliver a warm Liverpool Welcome throughout the City region. (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 6)

In fact, a considerable amount of restructuring has taken place as a result of Liverpool's winning bid, with Liverpool City Council's tourism activity being transferred to Liverpool Culture Company, and with the redistribution of activities between The Mersey Partnership and Liverpool Culture Company, especially the transferral of the city's Tourist Information Centres to the latter (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 9).

### **Marketing Liverpool and Merseyside**

The tourism offer is analysed in terms of core products and experiences, developing products and experiences and associated target markets. Culture has been selected as one of the City Region's core products which indicates a certain level of collaboration between the local tourism

and cultural industries (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: pp. 19-20; 2005a: p. 13). While this thematic approach reflects a customer-oriented strategy and to a certain extent the diversity of experience offered by a destination such as Liverpool, it risks compartmentalising the interplay of experiences which the destination produces. Although place consumers may have one main motive in visiting, they are bound to experience a cross-section of products, services, people and events, some of which will not be controlled by the destination marketing agents. Having said this, the strategy recognises that a holistic approach is needed, and that therefore, although gaps exist in the product, the focus needs to be directed at developing the overall customer journey. As such, an initiative known as 'The Liverpool Welcome' has been devised to improve customer service, access and transport, the attractiveness of the tourist environment, and information services (The Mersey Partnership, 2005a: p. 14; 2006a: p. 27). The Liverpool Welcome concept will be "the glue that binds much of the investment together" (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: p. 26). The Destination Management Plan pays considerable attention to the importance of a skilled workforce for the success of a tourism destination and highlights the concern that providers are having difficulty recruiting chefs, food and room service staff, with migrant workers accounting for over 50% of the workforce in some cases (The Mersey Partnership, 2006a: p. 27). Therefore, more effort needs to be concentrated on raising the profile of tourism jobs, promoting them as a career, not just a stop-gap.

More generally, key to the strategy for the Liverpool City Region and the strategy for the North West which impinges upon it, are the concepts of excellence, quality, experience, customer orientation and the visitor economy (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: pp. 16-17, p. 25; NWDA, 2007: p. 4). In order to compete among an ever-increasing number of potential destinations, each location has to demonstrate that they are providing a whole experience, not just a commodity, which is tailored to the consumer's needs and which is, in short, the best.

### **Social inclusion and tourism for all**

As well as featuring in Liverpool's cultural strategy, social inclusion is an issue which is addressed in relation to tourism in the City. In investing so much in the places of tourism and the people who visit them, it is argued that a large investment is being made in the residents of the destination as well. "Indeed it is ultimately their interests that are paramount, since it is for their economic and social well being that we are working", it is claimed (NWDA, 2007: p. 6). While tourism can clearly be beneficial to the social, environmental and economic regeneration of places, this slightly debatable statement overestimates the extent to

which tourism initiatives of this sort can positively affect the economic status and social well being of individuals living in the City. Other writers have also questioned the role of place marketing in increasing the fortunes of local citizens. The notion of “the battle of the growth machines” as discussed by Munck (2003: p. 10, drawing on Molotch and Logan, 1985: p. 144), is evident in the various tourism documents. Solely from the terminology used in the title, “*The Liverpool City Region, Winning Tourism for England’s North West*” (The Mersey Partnership, 2003, emphasis added), there is a resonance of this. The result is that, as Munck (2003: p. 10) describes, “Competition between places seems to take over from competition to boosting its local fortunes against other cities.” However, in the long term the extent to which this battle actually benefits the destination socially or environmentally is uncertain. While those responsible for the development of tourism claim to be doing so in the name of some kind of social reform, there are indications that priority is given to developments that “have the greatest potential for increasing the economic value of tourism” (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 19).

Another observation which can be made from these strategies is that there is a focus on the image of the destination. There is constant mention of the role of perceptions and the attractiveness of the environment in relation to regeneration. While positive image can play a role in attracting visitors and creating local pride, in itself it is resonant of superficial change rather than fundamental social change. It also appears that in Liverpool the main focus of tourism promotion is directed towards the City’s physical attractions. While the key festivals in the City do provide a meeting point for tourism and local creative and cultural activity, the less publicised and more informal activity does not appear to be connected to the tourism offer of the City. Tourism could be coordinated with current cultural initiatives in order to make a sustainable, socially inclusive, tourism offer.

Furthermore, while one of the guiding principles upon which both Liverpool’s tourism strategy and that for the North West are based is “access for all” / “tourism for all” (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 17; NWDA, 2007: p. 9), no indication is given as to the action which will be taken to ensure that these principles are adopted. While some initiatives referred to elsewhere in the documents could be seen as encouraging social inclusion and welcoming diversity, they do not necessarily actively engage people in the experiences which the tourism industry is offering, but include them as a representation of this. The Mersey Champions programme, based on the strength of word-of-mouth recommendation, encourages local residents and satisfied visitors to act as ambassadors for the area (The Mersey Partnership, 2003: p. 6). For residents, while this initiative helps to engender pride, their role appears

to be “welcoming and helping visitors” rather than engaging in the same activity as tourists themselves. In a similar vein, in reference to the tourism benefits which have been accrued through Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture status, the tourism strategy refers to the opportunities presented for the City’s minority populations “to celebrate their own cultures and their part in the wider fabric of Liverpool” as representatives of “The World In One City” (*ibid.*: p. 5). However, again this is suggestive of the polarisation between tourist activity and that of various socio-cultural groups within the City. While it is a positive move to encourage local cultural groups to express their cultural background in this way, it tends to be the elements of culture which can be used to put on a show that are celebrated rather than the culture of people’s everyday lives. Furthermore, it still does not facilitate access for excluded groups to cultural venues and activities which at the moment they see as irrelevant or inaccessible.

## Conclusions

After analysing a range of documents, it would be fair to say that while Liverpool’s cultural and tourism initiatives are increasingly drawing on the concepts of public participation and social inclusion, there is still some way to go to ensure that these are policies which are embedded in long-term strategies with sustainable outcomes. It is also crucial that these initiatives take into account the culture of Liverpool as it is, not as it was or as it is perceived or hoped to be. While it would be naïve to expect tourism and cultural initiatives to cure all urban ills, there is evidence that real engagement with people can achieve positive results.

Although the tourism bodies in Liverpool have placed culture on their agenda, their definition of culture appears to be significantly narrower than that of some of the cultural organisations. The former seem to concentrate on fixed notions of culture and cultural products which can be packaged to appeal to more affluent markets and therefore result in more spending. What the strategic documents seem to overlook is the informal production of culture: culture, not as something to be packaged or sold or turned into a show or exhibition, but culture as subconscious or semi-conscious practices.

The cultural organisations, or some at least, are attempting to encourage wider cultural consumption by highlighting lived cultures which are more relevant to the everyday. However, in tourism, there seems to be a polarity between the production and consumption of culture. Combining the more informal cultural activity in the City with tourism initiatives would be a way of providing a more sustainable and inclusive tourism offer. However, it appears that for the moment a gap

exists between the aims of Liverpool's cultural and tourism strategies and actual practice.

Finally, it remains to be pointed out that the observations made in this paper are based on the impressions created by the documents consulted. However, the findings of this research will be reconsidered at a later stage, taking into account the views of a broad sample of informants.

## Note

- <sup>1</sup> The cultural sector is defined by Liverpool Culture Company as "tourism, sports, heritage and the creative industries" (2005b: p. 6).

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