Mobilising Manchester through the Manchester International Festival: Whose city, whose culture? An exploration of the representation of cities through cultural events

By:

Hannah Bayfield

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The University of Sheffield

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Urban Studies & Planning

Supervised by: Dr Andy Inch and Professor John Flint

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Abstract

In times of ongoing austerity, local authorities are under increasing pressure to enforce a wide range of budget cuts. Culture is one area often under threat yet, despite this, there are areas of the UK that continue to support the kind of large-scale culture-led regeneration that has been prominent since the late 20th Century. Despite the multi-faceted benefits that culture can have for cities, urban regeneration literature has a tendency to focus on evaluative studies based on outcome rather than process, and studies of cultural policy focus heavily upon economic imperatives. In response to this, the work presented here aims to examine the practices involved within the production and promotion of cultural events. Through exploring the motivations of those involved in these processes and incorporating an understanding of culture's diverse nature an understanding of the value placed upon culture is developed.

Using a mixed methodology incorporating qualitative methods of observation, interviewing and document analysis, this thesis uses a grounding in cultural studies to explore the way one recurring cultural event illuminates processes of culture-led regeneration within a contemporary urban context. Themes of capital and power are drawn on throughout in order to examine the everyday practices that lead to the dominance of particular representations of the city through its culture. This approach allows for the problematisation of processes of culture-led regeneration, and the exploration of themes of city identity within this context.

The research places culture as a key factor in the (re)production of city identity, highlighting how those in positions of relative power play a distinct role in the development and articulation of this identity. The ethnographic methodology adds weight to the field of culture-led regeneration by exploring cultural value through everyday practices, offering a different angle to both academic and policy-driven research in this area.

1 Introduction

In the UK in 2015, arguments around culture and cultural value are prominent. From a desire to protect culture and the arts in the face of ongoing austerity and budget cuts, to questions of education and the potential for a shift from STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to STEAM subjects (including the addition of art), academic and policy studies such as the AHRC's Cultural Value projects and the 2015 Warwick Commission report on the future of cultural value (Neelands *et al*, 2015) position culture as a central facet of life in the UK, and one worthy of ongoing discussion. The agenda of local councils in terms of incorporating culture and cultural events into their strategies stretches back beyond this more recent shift, however. There are numerous examples across the UK and beyond of the ways in which the attraction and development of cultural events have the potential to lead to a multitude of benefits for urban areas including those that have faced periods of post-industrial decline, with such benefits often being claimed vociferously by local councils and proved in part by evaluative research.

What can be seen as a result of this incorporation of cultural events into urban regeneration schemes and rhetoric is that, increasingly, there is an acceptability of the instrumentalised use of culture this signifies, with a common understanding and acceptance of the economic benefits and related impacts of tourist attraction being more widely recognised than an understanding of 'softer' impacts such as culture's impact on wellbeing. What the current wave of academic and policy literature suggests, however, is that it is time to move beyond these acceptances and conceptualisations, to consider a more multi-faceted understanding of culture's incorporation into urban regeneration and planning, and how this relates to understandings of cultural value. Not only has a focus on economic benefits seemingly done little to dampen the pressure for culture and the arts to prove its worth in economic terms, but viewing culture's use within urban regeneration and development as predominantly economic can be reductive: as Throsby remarks, "it is important also to remember that cultural goods and services […] are distinguished from other goods by the fact that they yield cultural as well as economic value" (2001: 163).

Little room is left here to examine a range of other issues, ranging from the way in which a varied cultural offer can improve people's lives, to the image of cities that is being created and perpetuated through cultural events, and who these representations are created by and for. In considering these issues, it can be posited that examining the

instrumentalised use of culture within cities involves the exploration of a range of tensions that have often been left under-explored within academic literature. From the tensions between economic and social impacts of cultural events, to arguments around 'high' vs popular culture, there are levels of complexity in the field of culture and urban regeneration that can be left unexamined if we accept simplistic measures of 'value' (including, but not limited to, those of economic value). Additionally, there is room to further problematise culture's use within urban regeneration by considering the ways in which culture, and cultural events, are utilised as part of exercises in place-marketing, branding, or what may be considered to be deeper attempts at place-making.

In researching the contemporary uses of cultural events within cities, this thesis incorporates a close examination of the Manchester International Festival (MIF), using this as a key example of a number of tensions inherent in the use of culture and cultural events to contribute to the development of a city, such as those outlined above. By exploring these tensions, it is apparent that a case such as MIF encapsulates a number of issues around cultural value, from economic versus social benefits, to shifts in understandings of the urban that can occur as a result of the way in which a city may be branded or marketed through its cultural offering. It raises questions as to whether the inclusion of cultural events in regeneration strategies connects more closely with simple aims of place-marketing and branding, or whether they can be seen to contribute to a broader exercise in place-making that covers a range of goals that stretch beyond the attraction of tourism and inward-investment. The aim, objectives and research questions that are being explored here are stated below, along with the intended contributions of this research, and an outline of the structure of the chapters that follow.

1.1 Research Aims

Here the overarching aim of the research is given, before breaking this down into a number of objectives being considered throughout and the specific research questions that are being answered.

1.1.1 Aim

This research aims to discover what kind of Manchester MIF represents, and how this relates to the city's development trajectory, including its contemporary embrace of culture-led regeneration. In researching the embodied, embedded and situated festival experience of MIF through ethnographic methods, Manchester's cultural structures more generally are illuminated, thus developing a greater understanding of the way in which the festival represents Manchester, and what the outcomes of this representation are. By studying the representation of Manchester through a case study of MIF, themes of power and capital related to the promotion and regulation of culture within the highly branded post-industrial city are explored, unearthing culture as a tool closely linked to structures of urban governance and tied up with themes of representation and identity. This allows the understanding of culture within regeneration to be viewed as more than a tool for inward investment, as well as giving greater consideration to the processes behind culture-led regeneration than is often found within regeneration literature. This problematisation of culture in cities aims to go beyond a number of taken-for-granted assumptions about culture (such as the assumption that economic benefits are those of most importance) in order to discover who has the power to promote and produce dominant visions of culture within the city, and who benefits from these.

1.1.2 Objectives

- To understand MIF in the context of Manchester's regeneration and development landscape.
- To develop an understanding of how Manchester has utilised culture through the example of MIF, and for what ends.
- To understand the patterns of influence that this mobilisation of culture has, and the processes and practices behind this.
- To explore the networks of individuals involved in the conceptualisation and mobilisation of culture within the event and the city.
- To consider the influence of cultural elites within the city.

- To use a mixed-methods approach in order to achieve the above.

1.1.3 Research Questions

1) How are visions, understandings and representations of Manchester formed through MIF?

2) How are these understandings articulated through practices?

3) Is MIF an elite project about economics?

4) What are the cultural projects that come out of this and how does this position MIF within Manchester's contemporary urban narrative?

5) How can an understanding of cultural processes within MIF and Manchester contribute to more general contemporary arguments about the use and value of culture within cities?

1.2 Research Contributions

The contributions of this study combine the methodological, the theoretical and conceptual, and the empirical. In methodological terms, the use of ethnographic methods has been rare within the field of culture-led urban regeneration, and thus offers an opportunity to explore this area in a way that complements existing research without replicating it. The theoretical or conceptual contribution lies in combining both cultural studies and urban regeneration literature and theories, offering a new view of culture and urban regeneration to add weight to a number of previous studies. This is achieved through a focus upon depth rather than breadth of knowledge (by using one case study), as well as through the explicit application of concepts such as power and capital, as well as place-marketing and place-making, to the field of urban regeneration. Empirically, the research presented here gives an in depth look at the micro-processes of a key contemporary example of a cultural event that claims to have been successful in helping to reposition a post-industrial city, with the richness derived from ethnographic methods and embedded field research offering lessons in the ways in which culture is utilised within our cities, and the processes and practices involved in this. The ethnographic methods used here allow the research to move beyond dominant accounts of culture-led regeneration, focusing instead upon the practices through which culture-led regeneration is enacted on a daily basis, generating both economic and cultural value in a variety of ways.

1.3 Thesis Structure

Following on from this introduction, the thesis proceeds through contextual background, a review of the literature, the framework on which the research is based and the methodology used before presenting the empirical findings of the study. In Chapter 2, the context of the research is outlined, giving a brief historical trajectory of urban regeneration before focusing specifically on details of the case study – both of Manchester as a city and the Manchester International Festival – in order to give an understanding of Manchester that informs which literature has been utilised. Following on from this, Chapter 3 examines the literature in greater depth, broadly looking at culture and urban regeneration. Definitions of culture are considered, with a specific look at culture's use within, or co-option into, urban regeneration, before examining contemporary regeneration literature more closely in terms of themes such as city branding and marketing, and considerations from the economic to the social.

Chapter 4 introduces the framework on which this research is based, using the study of related literature to identify the concepts that have been useful in conducting and analysing the empirical work. Here, power and capital are drawn out as key in helping to understand the use of culture within urban regeneration, particularly in terms of understanding the practices and micro-processes that lead to particular choices being made about what types of culture to promote within the city. Concepts of city identity are also discussed. The methodology underpinning this empirical work is explained in Chapter 5, considering both the cultural studies frame through which the research is presented and a number of particular concepts that have been of use in exploring MIF. The methods used within the study are outlined – incorporating participant observation, interviews, and document analysis – with consideration given to the ways in which these methods have been conducted and how the data gleaned from them has been analysed.

Chapters 6 and 7 present the findings of the research. First, Chapter 6 looks at the way representations of the city are constructed through branding exercises and the activities of networks, tracing the contextual history that has led to the formation and ongoing support of MIF. It finds that the Festival has been key in the presentation of Manchester as the 'Original Modern' city – a construction that is examined in detail. Leading on from this, Chapter 7 examines the practices and micro-processes involved in these articulations of the city through culture, looking at examples of specific MIF events as well as a number of understandings gained from observation of the day-to-day activities of the Festival. The result is a picture of a city image or representation that is

formed and perpetuated by networks of cultural and civic elites, for whom the purpose of such representations remains clearer than it perhaps does to a wider audience not involved in these networks.

Chapter 8 reflects further on the empirical findings. It considers whether, from the evidence presented here around the representation of the city fostered by networks of elites, MIF can be seen as an elite exercise of predominantly economic regeneration, or whether it displays a wider set of understandings of cultural value. It also analyses whether an event such as this ties in with ideals of multi-faceted place-making or more branding-focused themes of place-marketing. Finally, a number of conclusions are presented in Chapter 9, along with implications and recommendations for further research, positioning culture-led regeneration as an area worthy of more varied study than has been conducted to date and raising questions about the uses of culture and how we value cultural events in contemporary society.

2 Context

This chapter is intended to give some background information on the field, as well as introduce the case study on which this research is based. A brief outline of contemporary urban regeneration offers a general basis from which to work, with an account of cultural events and urban festivals giving a more specific understanding of the area of research. Following this, the case study through which these are being examined is introduced, giving background to both the city of Manchester and specifically the Manchester International Festival.

2.1 Contemporary Urban Regeneration, and After

The structural changes that many of the (Western) world's cities have seen since the 1970s – brought about by widespread deindustrialisation and the associated issues of urban decline that this has led to – became increasingly characterised by processes of urban regeneration throughout the 1990s, which were seen as "profoundly transforming our urban areas, both in terms of their appearance and the ways in which we live in them" (Jones and Evans, 2008: 1). Whilst cities can never be static, or finished, entities, from the 1980s onwards the UK has seen a level of change and (re)development rarely seen in the country's history (with the 19th Century industrial revolution and the post-war restructuring of the 1940s providing exceptions). The process of urban regeneration at work here can be difficult to define, but it is generally seen as representing a more comprehensive type of urban intervention that has followed periods of post-war urban redevelopment and growth during the latter half of the 20th Century (Roberts, 2000). Table 1 shows a more detailed description of this transition, marking each decade from the 1950s to the 1990s as a different period of policy (though it should be added that the demarcation of policy types is, in reality, not as clear cut as the divisions presented here, with the term 'urban regeneration' being used prior to the 1990s – although it is during the 1990s that it gathered pace).

Table 1: The Evolution of Urban Regeneration (Adapted from Roberts, 2000: 14)

Period	Policy Type	Major Strategy
1950s	Reconstruction	Reconstruction and extension of older areas of towns and cities often based on a 'masterplan'; urban growth.
1960s	Revitalisation	Continuation of the 1950s theme; suburban and peripheral growth; some early attempts at rehabilitation.
1970s	Renewal	Focus on *in-situ* renewal and neighbourhood schemes; still development at periphery.
1980s	Redevelopment	Many major schemes of development and redevelopment; flagship projects; out of town projects.
1990s	Regeneration	Move towards a more comprehensive form of policy and practice; more emphasis on integrated treatments.

A number of characteristics of regeneration in the UK set this phase of urban regeneration apart from the previous policy types outlined in Table 1, for example the increase in partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and a returning emphasis on the role of communities (Roberts, 2000). Following their landslide election victory in 1997 that saw them end 18 years of Conservative rule in the UK, "The Labour government has stated that its regeneration policy objectives are to enhance economic development and social cohesion through effective regional action and integrated local programmes" (Hill, 2000: 37), including the reversal of the trend for outmigration from the cities (both in retail and residential terms). However, despite this shift from redevelopment to regeneration, the Labour government in power from 1997-2010 did continue to work under a number of the parameters set by the previous Conservative government, particularly through a continued adherence to certain neoliberal ideas, from deregulation to privatisation of previously nationalised assets. For example, the increase in partnership working as a part of urban regeneration from 1997 onwards did not reverse the trend of an emphasis on competition (whether for funding

or as part of a wider push towards 'competitive cities'), and these neoliberal influences "played a major role in setting the agenda and determining the shape of urban policy" (Hill, 2000: 44). Jones and Evans have referred to this as a philosophy "of market forces guiding the private sector to invest, with the state intervening only as far as it created the conditions for the private sector to step in" (2008: 9), whereby a more competitive city becomes a more successful city. Policy papers such as the 'Our Towns and Cities' white paper (DETR, 2000), or the Urban Task Force's 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' (UTF, 1999) and 'Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance' (UTF, 2005) emphasise a number of the goals of contemporary urban regeneration; governance based on partnership, and intended outcomes of well designed, well integrated urban spaces which offer opportunities for work, dwelling and leisure time.

The priorities of the coalition government that gained power in 2010 and the newly formed Conservative government in 2015 have, however, centred primarily around austerity measures in the aftermath of the 2008 recession, and urban regeneration has taken on a necessarily different form. It must be noted, of course, that urban regeneration comes from a position where "Cities are dynamic, not static places; they offer opportunities as well as presenting challenges" (Hill, 2000: 38), and the period beyond the 2008 recession has seen a number of new challenges arise, such as the issue of halted construction on numerous mixed-use regeneration construction schemes – or 'zombie sites' as Pugalis (2011) refers to these areas of dilapidation, and the aforementioned policy shift towards austerity.

The changes that have come alongside this have led to a reduction – or even omission – of specific urban regeneration policies at the national level, although locally some of the activity related to urban regeneration policies of the 1990s and 2000s remains in some form. Wilks-Heeg (2016) discusses the changes that have occurred in urban policy during these early stages of the 21st century, particularly looking at the place-based initiatives that seem to have lost popularity in latter years. One of his conclusions is that urban policy programmes "are frequently judged to have a greater impact on places than the people who live in them", highlighting (amongst other issues) the displacement of populations and commenting that the result of this appears to be that the UK government "have abandoned ABIs [Area Based Initiatives] entirely (Wilks-Heeg, 2016: 21). In discussing this further, Wilks-Heeg refers to the work of Lawless (2010) who comments that regeneration was not a feature of the Laour, Conservative or Liberal Democrat policy statements ahead of the general election in 2010, and, as such, refers to

the coalition government of 2010 to 2015 as demarking "a phase of post-urban policy" that has continued into the administration of the current Conservative government (ibid.).

It is this contemporary policy context that has led Matthews and O'Brien to assert that "The 'good times' of regeneration in the decade of growth will never return" (2016: 29), commenting that those areas that were seen to bolster community regeneration are "the very services that are seen as the 'low-hanging fruit' for cash-strapped local authorities to cut" (2016: 35), listing arts and cultural policy as amongst the casualties. They do, however, acknowledge that in some areas partnership working and local leadership are still contributing to certain areas of development left out of wider policy landscapes. Referring to this as "an elite form, whereby local 'leaders' are charged with responsibility for economic growth" (Matthews and O'Brien, 2016: 36), we shall see throughout this thesis that much of the investment in culture and the arts that can be seen in the case of Manchester falls within this area of activity. It appears, therefore, that an example such as Manchester's continuing support of (some areas of) culture and the arts becomes an example of 'culture-led regeneration after regeneration', whereby contemporary discourses of cultural value feed into urban policy and continue to have an impact on the cultural outputs of the city in the way regeneration initiatives did throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

However, despite the changing urban problems that face processes of (post-)regeneration, Roberts' (2000) definition of regeneration remains a useful starting point, describing urban regeneration as:

> "comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change" (Roberts, 2000: 17)

An element of this integrated vision that has become increasingly prominent is a focus on the positive benefits that can be brought about through culture and cultural events (Evans, 2005; Miles, 2005), which is discussed below.

2.2 Cultural Events and Urban Festivals

Increasingly, culture and cultural events such as urban festivals have been incorporated into urban regeneration schemes, and urban policy in the contemporary "post-urban policy" (Wilks-Heeg, 2016) era (see Garcia, 2004a, amongst others). The idea of

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competitive and creative cities equating to successful cities, in particular by attracting a 'creative class' of individuals who use creativity in their day-to-day working practices and are deemed to drive the economic growth of our cities (Florida, 2002), has been influential despite a lack of concrete causal evidence to show that creative clusters or milieus really do improve a city's competitive position (Evans, 2009). The benefits – often couched in economic terms – of attracting cultural events such as the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) are linked to the increased prominence of event policy within cities where "Major events strategies are now an essential component of the aggregate brand narrative of a destination" (Foley *et al*, 2012: 87).

Culture has thus become a defining aspect of contemporary urban regeneration, and programmes of development as we move through a 'post-regeneration' era. Despite culture having always been a part of the everyday life of urban existence, this current trend for the mobilisation of culture in order to benefit cities approaches culture in a somewhat different context to past conceptions of the term. Whilst there is, as ever, a multiplicity of understandings of the meaning of culture (as will be expanded upon in Chapters 3 and 4), there now seems to be an inescapable focus on the image and marketability of a city according to its cultural aspects, leading some to display a distrust of cultural policy, a phenomenon that has been referred to as 'bourgeois urbanism' (Goonewardena and Kipfer, 2005), in which cultural diversity is appropriated and re-packaged in a fashionable, marketable way.

Despite these misgivings, urban cultural policy has become a global phenomenon, with findings showing that between 2005 and 2008 "Over 80 cities/city-regions produced some explicit policy or strategic plans in the creative city/industries field (a total of 235 cases)…within 35 nation-states across all major continents" (Evans, 2009: 1010). The overarching idea within many of these cultural policies, including those most favoured in the UK, is that, when used as a part of a broader regeneration outlook, cultural facilities and events improve the image of a city, making it more likely to attract investment in terms of new businesses and increased tourist numbers. Unsurprisingly this idea leads to a particular conception of culture – essentially one that is easily recognisable and, as such, easily 'sold' to an audience. Whilst cultural developments have undoubtedly had some positive impacts on many cities (for example the benefits of tourism – Miles, 2005; Smith, 2007a), it is important to understand the conceptualisation behind these particular definitions of culture, including who the intended beneficiaries or target audiences are (and, therefore, who is excluded from this process). The focus

often tends to be on imported, rather than local or indigenous, culture and cultural artefacts, thus seemingly excluding local interests, a criticism often made of the development of Bilbao's Guggenheim museum (Jones and Evans, 2008). This may be unsurprising in the context of museums and galleries, with their traditional association with 'high culture' (though it should be noted here that the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' culture is perhaps less clear today than it was deemed to be during the rise in popularity of cultural studies in the 1970s) but it is perhaps more surprising when it comes to the use of cultural events and festivals, which have a longer history not so strongly associated with such forms.

Festivals, and festivity more generally, have long been a part of urban life, and indeed have played an important role for longer than urban dwelling has, with many traditional festivals being based around the rituals of rural life such as the harvest (Foley *et al*, 2012). From these beginnings, the conception of the 'festival' has both changed and grown, with multiple conceptions co-existing including those that feed into contemporary programmes of culture-led regeneration. The increasing prevalence of cultural festivals has included a rise in the number of city-based festivals, particularly in such heavily urbanised countries like the UK (Quinn, 2005). In their book on Event Policy, Foley *et al* neatly sum up this transition of festivals in one chapter heading: "Events and Festivity: From Ritual to Regeneration" (2012: 21). Whilst there are bound to be exceptions to this shift, such as continued adherence to religious festivals, in general this does not just capture the shift of events and festivals from a form of tradition to a city's tool of regeneration, but also alludes to the shift from festivity celebrated by the community to festivity which can, in some cases, be foisted upon the community; Foley *et al* point out that these highly controlled events "often have little to do with celebration, experience, spontaneity or freedom" (2012: 28).

Broadly speaking, urban festivals can be characterised as transitory (for example the European Capital Of Culture (ECOC)), recurring (such as the Liverpool Biennial or Manchester International Festival), or one-off events, with the common trait of being centred around a desire to portray cities as attractive, desirable locations. The former has been the type most explored within academic literature, with numerous studies based around the ECOC and its legacy for host cities in particular (see for example Booth and Boyle, 1993; Deffner and Labrianidis, 2005; Garcia, 2004b). The impact of these events has been explored both in policy and in academia, with economic impact studies the most commonly occurring form of analysis. Whilst this is understandable

given the perceived measurement capacity afforded by such analyses, and the inclusion of economic outcomes as a part of the rationale of many such events, it is now broadly agreed that such studies do not provide a full picture of the workings and outcomes of such events (Evans, 2005; Garcia, 2005; Mommaas, 2004; Scott, 1997). There are therefore many facets to cultural events and festivals which remain underexplored.

A more multi-faceted exploration of the role that festivals – and culture more generally – play within our cities requires recognition of many different elements. These encompass, but are not limited to, the understanding that events and festivals are active tools, often of regeneration (rather than passive happenings); that they have complex power structures; are branded in careful, specific ways; involve systemic inclusion and exclusion; and that their effects on cities are many and varied. This study will address these considerations.

2.3 Introducing the Case Study

2.3.1 Manchester

Manchester has been chosen as the case study location for this thesis primarily due to Manchester City Council's (MCC) ongoing financial support of culture and the arts despite the policy context of austerity, the reduced national focus on ABIs, and the reduction in spending on areas such as cultural policy mentioned above. The City of Manchester is one of 10 boroughs that make up Greater Manchester[1], and the most recent 'Manchester factsheet' produced by MCC gives the estimated population of the borough as 520,200 people (MCC, 2016), whilst the total Greater Manchester population is over 2.7 million (figures taken from the ONS Dataset for mid-2014 population estimates for the UK). Whilst the primary focus here is Manchester itself, this wider population of Greater Manchester is of relevance, particularly in terms of the disparity between the redevelopment of Manchester from the 1990s onwards, and the lesser investment in many of the surrounding areas (Harding *et al,* 2010).

What is also of key importance – and shall be referred to at various points throughout the thesis – is that Manchester's political landscape contributes significantly to its regeneration and cultural policies. The stability of the city's Labour administration plays a role here (with Labour Party control of the council since 1974, and the same Leader and Chief Executive since 1996 and 1998 respectively), with the political stability giving

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[1] The full list of Greater Manchester boroughs is as follows: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

the administration a confidence that could be seen to lead to bold or progressive activities. From Manchester's key role in the 'Northern Powerhouse' plans for better-integrated transport across the region (HM Government and Transport for the North, 2015), to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) ongoing work on 'DevoManc' and the push towards greater devolved powers for the city including "the first directly elected metro-wide Mayor outside of London" (HM Treasury and GMCA, 2015), these are just the latest examples in the city administration's drive to control its own fortunes.

As the UK's third largest city (and widely considered to be its first industrial city), Manchester can be seen variously as a city of revolution, of pioneering, of extremes of poverty and wealth, of boom and bust, of de- and regeneration. As Peck and Ward assert, "It has always been a revolutionary city in the sense that waves of social, economic and political change, while not always made in Manchester, nearly always yield particularly vivid expressions and/or responses here" (2002: 9), creating a city that is never short of event, spectacle or opinion. Alongside this often radical history (encompassing the Chartist movement, the birth of free trade, and the inspiration of Marx and Engels) is a rich cultural history, with Manchester (often seemingly accidentally) proving itself to be ahead of its time in terms of its cultural endeavours and offerings.

In particular, it is the period most commonly associated with de-industrialisation within the city (roughly from the 1960s to the 1980s) which appears to have had the greatest cultural impact on the city (Hetherington, 2007) (though the ongoing impact of the city's footballing history stretches beyond this), leading to Manchester attracting a greater deal of attention; from the popular culture of television shows like Coronation Street, to Manchester's contributions to the British Kitchen Sink movement –most notably Shelagh Delaney's first play *A Taste of Honey*, charting the social life and struggles of a Salford mother and daughter. It is also this period in which Manchester's music scene began to thrive on a national as well as a local platform, with social commentary again much to the fore in the music of the likes of Joy Division, The Smiths, or The Fall.

Even beyond the phase of urban regeneration and renewal in the city which followed these decades of decline, it is often the mythologised accounts of the city formed by Ian Curtis, Morrissey or Mark E. Smith that remain at the forefront of popular imagination, despite the vast changes in fortune that the city – and many, though by no means all, of

its inhabitants – has seen since these songs, often of claustrophobia, decay and dispossession, were penned. Where once "from the rollercoaster to the discotheque, from Victorian Manchester to Manchester in the 1960s, the urge to fly free of work, poverty, Manchester or domestic disaster has underpinned popular culture in the city" (Haslam, 2000: xxvi): Manchester, although surely not alone in this, now has a tendency to use this cultural heritage and legacy as a regeneration mechanism or form of entrepreneurial urbanism, in order to draw people in, to site the city as a cultural hub and to use what once would have been termed underground to boost the overground. Indeed, as a city it has often been accused of trading on past glories, with Factory Records, the Haçienda and 'Madchester' derided by some as the kind of albatross that Liverpool found in the Beatles (Lashua, 2011), impacting on the city's ability or willingness to shape new representations.

Manchester's cultural developments do, however, stretch far beyond the rose-tinted views of past glories, both in terms of physical developments and creative activities. Haslam refers to some of the developments of Manchester's cultural offer, particularly the Bridgewater Hall (home of the Hallé Orchestra), as "detached and uninterested…Sanitised, bright, well lit and clean, insulated from reality" (2000: xxx), adding that "the key to the cultural, economic and social health of Manchester doesn't lie in piling up shiny new halls or instigating new developments" that are "more about image than reality" (2000: 253) – a criticism reminiscent of Davis' earlier impressions of Los Angeles as "culturally hollowed out" (Davis, 1990: 78). The tensions drawn out here still remain: a consistent sense of unease that comes with the widespread redevelopment of a city in glass and steel. The decline and dilapidation of areas of Manchester is somehow at odds with this brash world of branding, marketing and image creation that has stemmed from many recent cultural developments.

The extremes and exaggerations that Manchester has borne over the years have, it is claimed, led to "a spirit of dogged independence, sometimes expressed in the form of arrogant exuberance, sometimes as downright indifference to what the rest of the world thinks" (Peck and Ward, 2002: 1), a kind of self-assertion that some have traced back to "the earliest days of trade unionism in England, to the Chartist crusades and the city's leading role in the suffragette movement" (Haslam, 2000: xxix). Whilst this may in some cases lead to an adamant refusal to accept the 'new' urban realm of the city, it is also this arrogance that has driven much of the city's development, with a determination to succeed against the odds. The dogged determination of a number of the city's success

stories – whether Mancunian born and bred or not – from Sir Richard Leese in his long tenure as leader of Manchester City Council (MCC) to the late Tony Wilson's determination to put Manchester on the musical map with his work at Granada TV and for Factory Records and later in establishing the In The City music convention, matches the picture of a self-assured, even cocky, Mancunian identity which has commonly been constructed and, as we shall see in the empirical work presented here, can be seen at work in a number of the city's cultural and civic elites today.

The often radical politics of Manchester that led to the Chartist and free trade movements have given rise to a city of extreme examples of development (similar to the likes of Liverpool or Glasgow) – it has experienced greater boom and bust than many of its counterparts, for "Being first proved to be a double-edged sword. The first industrial city was the first to experience large-scale *de*industrialisation…which from the 1960s started to pull the guts out of the place" (Peck and Ward, 2002: 1). The period between the 1960s and 1980s may have produced some high calibre and well-respected cultural outputs, but this did little to remedy the structural, social and economic problems, exacerbated by industrial decline, that needed to be addressed. An unlikely turning point came in the form of the 1996 IRA bomb which struck Manchester's commercial and retail centre; which, rather than culminating in a sense of despair, proved to be a catalyst for regeneration: "In the days following the explosion local media and city leaders tended to stress the scale and economic costs of the damage, but also the resilient spirit of the city and its people" (Holden, 2002: 133-134). Holden illustrates this with advertising placed by the Manchester Evening News, simply reading "They went for the heart of Manchester. But missed the soul. Together we can rebuild our city." (MEN, 1996). This can be seen as part of a "politics of opportunity" (and also a politics of identity) (Holden, 2002: 134) that has played an important part in Manchester's redevelopment from this point onwards, turning negative situations to the city's own advantage.

If the aftermath of the IRA bomb pushed forward Manchester's redevelopment along consumerist, retail lines, the Commonwealth Games, hosted by the city in 2002, were seen as a way of kick-starting regeneration of a different kind, pouring investment into deprived areas of East Manchester, with Sir Richard Leese, leader of MCC, terming the regeneration impact as "A key reason for securing these Games" (Leese, quoted in Grant, 2010: 7). The Games were never simply about sport, incorporating as they did plans for physical and social regeneration of an area of the city neglected by

redevelopment aims up until this point. Culture, including but stretching beyond sporting achievement, was also emphasised, with MCC issuing a cultural strategy in the year of the Games which noted that "Manchester is a City with great cultural strengths and we need to build on our achievements in order to raise the profile of the City as a creative capital, increase opportunities for residents and to contribute to the City's economic prosperity" (Manchester City Council, 2002: 3), mirroring the emphasis on cultural policy from the New Labour government at a central level at this time.

Much of the city's success in gaining funding for regeneration projects – whether based around culture or otherwise – is due to its strong history of partnership working (Robson, 2004), evident from the 1980s onwards, from which point there has been "visible evidence of the impact of both local-government and central-government spending and of the increasing involvement of the private sector in ideas and in areas in which it had previously shown great reluctance to become involved" (Robson, 1988: 149) – involvement that has been crucial as public money for the likes of cultural spending has been consistently reduced. From physical and economic regeneration projects such as the much-vaunted redevelopment of Hulme in the wake of the successful City Challenge bid in 1992, to the partnerships between the residents' association Beacons for a Brighter Future and the New East Manchester New Deal for Communities, to the public-private partnerships involved in cultural endeavours such as MCC's support, alongside local businesses, of festivals such as the annual Food and Drink Festival (now in its 15th year), Literature Festival or Comedy Festival or the larger scope of the Manchester International Festival (MIF), partnership working has contributed to the development and regeneration of the city.

This activity has had positive impacts, bringing in much-needed investment to a number of areas, but "While the centre of the city has been comprehensively reconstructed, both physically and culturally, in ways that would have been hardly imaginable 15 or 20 years ago, many of the city's underlying social and economic problems have been displaced rather than solved" (Peck and Ward, 2002: 5), a situation which has not altered drastically in the intervening 10 years since Peck and Ward made the point. Peck and Ward refer to this surface-level intervention as "the political theatre of regeneration, with its set-pieces and carefully staged cast", who work on key flagship developments and promote the media-friendly achievements of winning funding, "rather than actually turning around entrenched social problems, let alone long-standing economic problems" (Peck and Ward, 2002: 6-7).

Part of this political theatre has been an increasing number of sporting and cultural events, from the Commonwealth Games and the staging of major football finals (cited above as a boost to regeneration) to the more recent development of MIF (itself a part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Games), which receives the support of a number of public and private funding bodies. These large-scale events bring numerous positives to the city – most notably in terms of increased footfall and tourist spending – yet it could be argued that this kind of 'theatre' also obscures the less desirable and more problematic elements of urban life, a facet of regeneration further explored in the following review of the literature. The way the development of the Bridgewater Hall was seen by Haslam (2000) to obscure the reality of its surrounding area, particularly nearby Hulme which has faced a variety of problems, is one example of this. To stretch back to another age, another example is that of nineteenth Century Manchester when the grand facades of the shops on Deansgate obscured the poverty of those living behind these barriers (Engels, 2009).

These tensions, the gulfs between the redeveloped city centre and the difficulties facing the majority of the population (particularly if you look at Greater Manchester's 10 boroughs as a whole), can be seen throughout the city. Manchester is an incredibly popular student city, a city that attracts young and creative professionals on the basis of its cultural history as well as its contemporary regeneration, yet remains a city facing high levels of deprivation. The 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation rank Manchester as the fourth most deprived local authority in England, and the second most deprived in terms of income deprivation, despite improvement in some areas (MCC, 2011). A long-standing concern is that "As renewal has increasingly been led by the private sector, so the suspicion lurks that it is only the areas with commercial potential which have benefited from public subsidy" (Robson, 1988: 149), with continuing evidence that areas with less 'potential' continue to suffer from economic and social problems.

As a result the areas that have received the investment bring with them a new, 'higher class' of clientele, leading to "the dispossession of those with the lowest consumer potential" (Mellor, 2002: 231) that comes with the increasing privatisation and commercialisation of public space, which, in Manchester, has been accompanied by "enthusiasm for excluding certain people and certain activities from the city centre; [so] a newly sanitized culture is leaving behind Manchester's northern, industrial heritage and music history" (Minton, 2009: 40) – an outcome that is perhaps an unavoidable result of playing by the rules of the regeneration game. As Holden stresses, quite simply, "the

politics of opportunity [in Manchester] has been characterised by an elite-based strategy" (Holden, 2002: 153). Within this strategy, much of the city's regeneration has favoured particular constructions of the urban and its associated cultures that match the attractive, aspirational outlook which, it is believed, will bring prosperity – an assertion that is, to some extent, questioned in this research through the example of MIF. Through this discussion of Manchester's political, social and economic background we begin to see how a publicly supported event such as MIF offers an opportunity to examine first-hand the way that cultural events have been incorporated into the Manchester City Council's strategies. By exploring a cultural event such as MIF a deeper understanding of the tensions outlined above can be gained, showing how this "political theatre of regeneration" is played out in the ways that cultural events contribute to dominant representations of the city.

2.3.2 Manchester International Festival

MIF, the centre of this study, is a biennial festival of specially commissioned art, theatre and music that was launched in 2007. The idea for the Festival was formed as a part of the legacy of Manchester's hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2002 and the subsequent establishment of both Marketing Manchester and the branding scheme 'Manchester: Original Modern', developed following Manchester City Council's hiring of the artist Peter Saville as Creative Director of the city. With a remit predominantly focused on 'high art' or 'high culture' (the first programme included Damon Albarn's first opera, *Monkey Journey to the West*, alongside visual artists and classical musicians), the festival is funded by a wide range of public and private bodies[2], and has received praise locally, nationally and internationally for its programme of events. However it has also generated controversy, particularly on the local scale, due in part to perceived inaccessibility of many of its events. MIF was never specifically cited as a regeneration tool, yet it does show similarities with the pattern of using culture-as-regeneration, particularly in its role in positioning Manchester as both tourist and business destination with a unique cultural offering. As outlined in the official evaluation of the first Festival in 2007:

> "The primary aim of the City Council was to drive economic development by substantially raising the profile of Manchester, attracting inward investment, by positioning the City as an international centre for culture and as a knowledge capital"

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[2] Funders up to this point have included MCC, Arts Council England, the now defunct North West Development Agency, property developers Bruntwood, and healthcare company PZ Cussons. A full list of funders is available in Appendix 1

Alongside this aim, the proportion of visitors that have come from outside the city for MIF events (and the money they are estimated to have spent whilst in the city) has been used as one of the evaluation criteria for each of the four festivals to date (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2008; Manchester International Festival, 2010; Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2012; Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2013), again serving to highlight this focus on inward investment and tourist attraction.

The festival has experienced a steady increase in attendance, from 200,930 attendees in 2007, to 231,445 in 2009, similar to the figure for 2011 (231,598). The 2011 figures are made up of 32 percent attendance at paid for events, compared to 68 percent for free events (MHM, 2012: 9). Whilst figures for the proportion of audiences attending paid/free events at the 2007 and 2009 festivals were not calculated, the figures for 2011 reflect the festival's shift in aims following its first year to increase the number of free events in order to cater to a broader audience (MHM and AAM, 2008). A part of MIF's attempts to foster greater involvement and participation from local audiences in particular has been the inclusion of MIF Creative from the 2009 festival onwards: a programme which encourages the festival and its performers to involve local communities in a variety of events, from the wide range of community and school groups who participated in Jeremy Deller's *Procession* in 2009 to 2011's *That Day We Sang*, which incorporated local school children in its choir.

This shift towards both greater community participation and an increase in the number of free events was a response to the official evaluation of the 2007 festival, in which it was determined that a particular issue was "the absence of a large, free, spectacular, celebratory event that would have attracted a diverse cross section of local people" (MHM and AAM 2008: 21). It was also an intrinsic part of the support given to the festival by Manchester City Council (MCC) and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), and has been successful in a number of its aims. Yet despite these shifts the festival remains, to many, an example of the workings of a cultural elite, inaccessible to the 'ordinary' resident. For example, 73 percent of audiences surveyed following the 2011 festival left education after either an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, with only 11 percent reporting leaving after A-Levels, and 9 percent leaving after

GCSEs (MHM, 2012: 39)[3]. It is apparent, therefore, that the festival continues to reach a core demographic made up predominantly of the more 'typical' arts-goer.

The Arts Council England 'Taking Part' questionnaire has consistently found higher arts attendance/engagement amongst the upper socio-economic group than the lower socio-economic group, though this gap has been narrowing since 2005/6 (DCMS, 2015)[4]. Whilst the remit of the festival as "an artist-led, commissioning festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture" (MHM, 2012: 4) has never been intended to be an all-inclusive, community based set of events, these statistics suggest that MIF presents Manchester as a cultured, forward-thinking city, without necessarily representing its cultural, economic and social diversity. The 2014 Autumn Statement confirmed that Manchester City Council will receive £78 million towards the development of a new flexible arts space and permanent home for MIF (Williams, 2014). This, along with the fact the festival is a recurring event, with its next instalment taking place in 2017 and investment set to continue beyond this, and makes it a particularly interesting arena of study due to the potential for longitudinal work and comparison over time.

A number of tensions surrounding MIF, particularly the potential antagonism between the aims associated with branding and inward investment and those more related to benefitting the local community, are emblematic of those tensions facing Manchester as a whole. These tensions can draw out the ways in which the definition and use of culture within cities can be highly contested, helping to develop a sense of the role that culture can play within a cultural political economy and instil a level of critique into understandings of this role. In order to explore such tensions effectively, the background of urban regeneration, cultural events, Manchester and MIF that has been offered here needs to be underpinned by a greater understanding of the literature within the field of urban regeneration, as well as a framework within which to position this literature and inform the methodology and empirical work of this study. The following chapters consider each of these elements.

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[3] For the purposes of comparison, whilst the data quoted here shows 93% of respondents to the MIF11 survey have educational attainment levels at NVQ Level 4 or above (i.e. GCSE or above), the most recent ONS survey data for Greater Manchester shows that only 31.9% of residents aged 16-64 have achieved this level (NOMIS, 2015).

[4] This must however be understood in the context of the evaluation, in which questionnaire responses only amounted to around 1% of audience figures.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

There is a great deal of complexity around culture and its uses within cities; from Victorian values of culture for societal good (Hunt, 2004), to its appropriation within the promotion and branding of cities (Ward, 1998), to more explicit exercises in culture-led urban regeneration (Evans, 2005, 2009; Garcia, 2004a). This chapter discusses the existing literature around the subject of culture, regeneration, urban policy and city branding and marketing; first in terms of the historical context of culture's use in cities (predominantly in the UK and Europe) followed by a more detailed exploration of the development of culture-led urban regeneration and development from the late 20th Century onwards. Following this, a critique of these practices is offered, highlighting some of the major concerns or contentions around the appropriation of culture, from questions of authenticity to a lack of reliable evidence of benefits. From this critique, a number of key concepts are developed, highlighting some of the areas in which further work is required, and laying the ground for the empirical parts of this study in which questions are asked as to how visions of the city are formed through cultural events, how evidence of these visions can be seen through practices and what this means within a contemporary narrative of the city.

In contemporary urban regeneration literature there are a number of terms that occur with some regularity, and are worthy of brief explanation here. Whilst the more pertinent concepts such as those of power and capitals shall be discussed in the development of the framework offered in the following chapter, a number of understandings require unpacking here in order to give context to the discussion that follows. These include the context of neoliberalism that was touched upon in Chapter 2, and the development of a particular set of conceptualisations of culture. The majority of the contemporary literature considered here focuses on cases from Western Europe and the USA, in which the political context can be described as broadly neoliberal, namely "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2005: 2). In the case of urban regeneration literature, neoliberalism is reflected within the encouragement of competition and the development of public/private partnerships such as those seen in this case study whereby local authorities seek to limit the negative impacts of deindustrialisation through regeneration

policy that incorporates both the public and private sector, and success is measured in part through the attraction of private business to cities. Next, comments are offered as to the conceptualisation of culture, and background is given as to the context of power and elites in the city, framing the understandings of culture and urban regeneration which follow.

3.1.1 Conceptualising Culture

Before discussing the historical trajectory of culture and urban regeneration and associated contemporary issues, a working definition of culture is offered here. This comprises a brief outline of the complexity of culture as a concept and some of the ways in which it is commonly used (particularly within the context of urban regeneration and policy). Though it has been used with great regularity, the following statement by Raymond Williams offers a succinct outline of culture's myriad definitions:

> "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and several distinct and incompatible systems of thought" (Williams, 1983: 87)

The complexity of culture outlined by Williams is, if anything, even greater today, in part due to the increase of culture-led regeneration. Eagleton takes a negative view of Williams' definitions, asking "[w]hat is it that connects culture as utopian critique, culture as way of life and culture as artistic creation? […] all three are in different ways reactions to the failure of culture as actual civilization" (2000: 20), and subsequently suggests that "[i]t is hard to resist the conclusion that the word 'culture' is both too broad and too narrow to be greatly useful" (2000: 32). Given the prevalence of contemporary utilisation of culture within urban policy, however, it is necessary to unpack the definitions and conceptualisations of culture. Despite difficulties of definition, Duncombe (amongst others) provides an important distinction in his attempts to define this slippery term, noting the difference between 'Culture' (with a capital C) and its lower-case counterpart 'culture'. The thesis here is that when capitalised, Culture can represent the material object of culture (such as a piece of artwork or a play), whereas culture in the lower-case form can be defined as "a set of values and norms and patterns of action that a people follow" (2007: 490). This distinction provides important insight when exploring the utilisation of culture by cities through regeneration initiatives, as much of such policy tends to focus on Culture, with

less emphasis placed upon the individual and collective (cultural) experience of such Cultures. Addressing both Culture and culture simultaneously, however, is challenging. Throughout the course of this research, attempts are made to address both Culture in the form of MIF's events, as well as the local and organisational cultures through which MIF's ethos and practices construct (and are constructed by) a sense of urban identity (though the lower case 'culture' is utilised throughout the thesis). In other words, the focus here is upon the (organisational) cultures that produce Culture, examining these in order to understand the extent to which Culture is utilised beyond its use as an economic development tool.

It should also be added here that within the understanding of 'capital C' Culture, questions arise around definitions of 'high' and 'low' or 'popular' culture, with the former often being conflated with middle and upper class tastes. This has been common from the beginnings of cultural studies as a discipline, where class was a defining element of early studies by the likes of Raymond Williams (1973; 1990), Richard Hoggart (1957) and E.P. Thompson (1991) (Johnson *et al*, 2004). Despite a broadening of the field that has shifted beyond the culture/class relationship, there is a legacy here of what would traditionally be seen as 'high' culture (theatre, galleries and the like) being seen as connected to the middle classes or elite individuals and groups possessing high cultural or symbolic capital (these are discussed in Chapter 4, in section 4.4). The popularisation of this idea means it still carries influence in contemporary studies of culture and regeneration, with, for example, critiques centred around museums and galleries as flagship regeneration projects that question the range of impacts of such 'high' culture interventions (Bilbao's Guggenheim museum being a key example here (Baniotopoulou, 2001; Evans, 2003)).

Culture is both highly complex and multifaceted, with a number of different representations that vary across space and between employment sectors. Williams' earlier offer of four distinct meanings of culture (1961) gives a succinct idea of this complexity, suggesting that culture can be conceived "as an individual habit of mind; as the state of intellectual development of a whole society; as the arts; and as the whole way of life of a group of people" (Eagleton, 2000: 35). It is the latter two of these that occur most commonly within studies of culture, and the third in particular which is studied most often within regeneration literature.

The predominant conceptualisation of culture within both urban regeneration and cultural policy is that of culture as a tool for drawing investment and tourism into the

city (Evans, 2009; Griffiths *et al,* 2003), reflecting the neoliberal context outlined above and indicating the ways in which culture has come to be seen as key in the post-industrial economy. Whilst the support of culture through regeneration or policy initiatives does enable the existence of many cultural events and institutions through the awarding of funds, there is a concern that only the most marketable of culture is supported here, whilst other cultural endeavours continue to struggle in a harsh economic climate (Jones and Evans, 2008: 138). Robson (2004) summarises these marketable aspects of culture as being five-fold: culture's impact on buildings and land markets, its link to tourism and job creation, the ability of sporting events to build social capital, the involvement of universities in cultural production, and the use of culture to improve image.

The suggestion here is that the types of culture utilised and promoted by regeneration are those that are strongly connected to inward investment and the creation of (primarily economic) capital (more detailed discussion of capital(s) follows in the research framework, on pages 68-70). There is, therefore, a "tension between 'culture' as something which can be exploited for economic development and something which is of value in its own right as part of a diverse and healthy city" (Jones and Evans, 2008: 137-138), and it is widely asserted that the latter is often neglected in favour of activities and developments that come with clearer indicators of success. As the empirical work in this study is focused upon an individual (though recurring) cultural event, it is the conception of culture as the arts that is most fitting in the discussion that follows. Though literature on city marketing and branding could be said to embrace the idea of culture as a way of life, (an idea which has been explored here through the embedded fieldwork which seeks to explore the cultures that produce cultural representations of the city). Before exploring the uses of culture within urban regeneration, however, attention is turned to the issues of power and elites within the city that underlie much of this work.

3.1.2 Power and Elites in the City

If cities are to be promoted and 'sold' on the basis of a certain amalgamation of (cultural) attributes, characteristics and events, as is increasingly the case in post-industrial cities worldwide (as outlined within the previous chapter), it is evident that choices must have been made by some individuals or groups as to which attributes are worthy of promotion. The thesis here is that representations of cities are, in part, constructions controlled by those with power in the urban context, often a small number of

individuals likely to be driven by very particular concerns, including – but not restricted to – those linked to the boosting of the local economy and a favourable urban image. In order to situate and understand the use of culture within contemporary urban regeneration, therefore, a discussion of the nature of power within the urban context is needed in order to frame the way use of culture in regeneration, policy, branding and marketing, as "[t]he integration of cultural economy shapes, and is shaped by, power relations among different stakeholders over time" (Shin and Stevens, 2013: 1719).

The key here is that there are a number of people within cities who possess a level of power that affords them the opportunity to construct a dominant narrative of the city, legitimised by the standing of such individuals, and the replicability of the narrative over a period of time. Atkinson, drawing upon the language and ideas of Bourdieu, notes that "within a particular field [such as urban regeneration] certain individuals/groups have the capacity (delegated power and symbolic authority) to *name* things and processes, thereby helping to constitute the structure of the social world and how it functions" (1999: 61. Emphasis in original). Thus, in terms of shaping the dominant representation of the city, these individuals/groups privilege and (re)produce a particular set of ideal images in order to better sell the city, whilst also working within a broader dominant narrative defined by a neoliberal context. Urban elites therefore make choices as to what forms of culture and cultural event should be funded or promoted in order to tie in with an image of a successful city. This image is constructed predominantly by these elites for both economic and public good, as well as the enhancement of these elites' own cultural or symbolic capital (themes which shall be discussed further in the following chapter). In order to critique well-known narratives in contemporary culture-led regeneration, there is a need to examine these constructions rather than to take them at face value, to question why such decisions are made, and do so in a way that has often been lacking in literature around regeneration, city branding and the evaluation of urban cultural events in order to critique what has become a staple of contemporary culture-led regeneration. In his study of partnership in British urban regeneration, Atkinson concludes that:

> "the discourses through which they [those involved in regeneration partnerships] think and express themselves are not neutral, […] they construct problems, solutions and actions in particular ways that are congruent with existing relations of power, domination and the distribution of resources" (1999: 70)

If there is no neutrality in these processes of urban regeneration, then there is an opportunity to further explore such processes and unpack (amongst other things) the

power relations behind them. In order to consider who has a level of control over the dominant representations of Manchester through the city's cultural pursuits, and to unpack the apparent neutrality or objectivity of such decision-making processes, a number of themes are discussed below: a trajectory of culture's links to urban regeneration, a discussion of contemporary urban regeneration literature, and the links that this has to work based around both urban (cultural) policy and city branding and marketing. A more nuanced understanding of culture within regeneration, policy and branding literature is sought, bringing together a number of areas which, when combined, can help develop an understanding of how representations of cities are controlled or managed by certain urban elites, and the impact that this has on the ways in which the city is viewed.

3.2 The Context of Culture and Urban Regeneration

3.2.1 Historical Trajectory: 19th/20th Century

As outlined within the previous chapter, it is evident that cities in Britain and internationally have utilised culture for centuries, whether through the building of cultural edifices such as museums and libraries or the ongoing popularity of event and spectacle (Foley *et al*, 2012). Despite the contemporary focus on culture as an urban regeneration or urban planning tool, the importance of culture and cultural events to cities stretches back a great deal further. Whilst branding and place-marketing (which frequently incorporates culture and regeneration frameworks) is often seen as an invention of the post-industrial age, there is in fact a longer trajectory of this phenomenon from the 19th Century onwards, in particular from the increase in popularity of British holiday resorts following the development and expansion of Britain's railway networks, as well as the boosterism of late 19th Century America (Ward, 1998) and the exhibitions, fairs and philanthropy of Victorian Britain (Evans, 2006).

In general terms, "[t]he aim of branding is to add symbolic value to a functional value by creating a narrative discourse on a product" (Vivant, 2011: 101), and cities have aimed to do this in a variety of ways, with slogans and promotional material of the post-industrial era often referring to the 'vibrancy' of these reinvigorated urban centres. Ward has noted how it seems that 'vibrant' has become the new buzz-word in urban branding, just as 'bracing' was pervasive in the 19th and early 20th Century advertising of British seaside resorts (1998: 222). So whilst this city branding seems suddenly ubiquitous, the history of the city's use of branding and place-marketing is not as new as one might expect. However, European (and particularly UK) examples have become increasingly

common over the course of the 20th Century and into the 21st, as "[e]very town, city, region and nation, it seems, is now frenetically selling itself with assertions of its competitive place advantage" (Ward, 1998: 1), attempting to position itself as competitive in an international, as well as a national marketplace.

Alongside an ongoing focus on urban branding and place-marketing, it is possible to trace a line of wider urban changes which display some of the shifts in urban policy that have come to utilise culture in recent decades. This is a trajectory of urban interventions from nineteenth Century beautification and sanitation, to the urban renewal of the mid-twentieth Century (including razing and rebuilding vertically), to the focus from the 1980s onwards on public spaces and regionalism, and the spectacular city as discussed by Hannigan (1998) and Zukin (1995) (Fessler Vaz and Berenstein Jacques, 2006: 243), in which culture plays a strong role (though, as shall be discussed, much of this more contemporary focus has its critiques and downsides). The later shifts identified by Fessler Vaz and Berenstein Jacques can be related, certainly within the UK or European context, to a political context of neoliberal ideologies, whereby event and spectacle are sought in order to effectively compete with other cities. Whilst culture's role in the promotion of the urban has been shown to have a longer trajectory, contemporary cultural uses can be defined in many cities by the context of de-industrialisation, particularly in the UK where the decline of industry, alongside Thatcherite politics, deeply affected the majority of urban areas. Bereft of manufacturing industry (or of industrial employment due to increased mechanisation of work), many UK cities from the 1980s onwards found themselves competing for funding that would help re-establish their ravaged economies and searching for new ways to promote themselves and attract investment in order to reverse their fortunes.

A result of this particular brand of urban politics has been an embrace of neoliberalism, with the notion of the competitive city being one of its defining points (Jones and Evans, 2008). From the context in England of competing for funding streams such as City Challenge schemes and the Single Regeneration Budget, to the international competitive context such as bids for the Olympic Games or ECOC, urban policy has become increasingly defined by its ability to raise a city's competitive game, and "[a]t a macro-level we can now see an historical evolution from a manufacturing to an informational to a cultural economy fuelled by forces of global capital, international tourism, and the search for comparative economic advantage" (Freestone and Gibson, 2006: 35). This brings us to the current state of culture within cities, where, a focus on

culture has shifted according to the political and economic landscape of the time, where now "culture-driven urban (re)generation has come to occupy a pivotal position in the new urban entrepreneurialism" (Miles and Paddison, 2005: 833).

3.2.2 The current state of culture in cities

There are a number of factors that characterise the contemporary use of culture and cultural events within cities. These include: the prevalence of cultural policy and its focus on competition, attracting a creative class and the rebranding or re-imagining of the city, the bringing together of culture, regeneration and economy and the focus on this within empirical studies and evaluations. Beyond this, however, it should be noted that not all competition is economic, and further, there are increasing arguments for the inclusion of other criteria in the fight for arts and culture, as exemplified in the UK by a number of current campaigns and exercises exploring the meaning of cultural value. These include the 2015 report of the Warwick Commission which addresses the future of cultural value in the UK (Neelands *et al*, 2015), and the existence of What Next? chapters around the UK, groups of self-selected members of the cultural and creative industries who discuss and lobby for these issues on a weekly basis[5].

Much like the term 'culture' itself, 'cultural value' is a phrase of contested meaning. Throsby refers to value as "a starting point in a process of linking the two fields [economy and culture] together" (2001: 20), but recognises cultural value as "various and variable", encompassing (but not limited to) aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical, symbolic and authenticity value (2001: 28-29). It is this multiplicity of meaning that makes the phrase difficult to pin down. Yet the existence of the Warwick Report and movements such as What Next? suggest that there is a longstanding, or even growing, recognition of the importance of these various values.

Discussing the background to 'The Cultural Value Project' set up by the AHRC in 2012, Crossick and Kaszynska suggest that discourses of cultural value have been driven by "[a] new approach to public sector management from the 1980s [which] meant that arts outputs came to be appreciated for their non-arts outcomes", adding that the impact agenda led arts organisations to align their objectives with current political priorities (2014: 121). They comment further that "the value of culture remains a highly contested

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5 What Next? Culture is a UK-wide movement of arts and cultural organisations coming together to host conversations about the future of culture: from funding to accessibility to education. More information on What Next? including its 2015 'Get Creative' collaboration with the BBC can be found at http://www.whatnextculture.co.uk/

issue within the intellectual tradition of the humanities" (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014: 123). Thus cultural value becomes increasingly linked to a number of other priorities, and is connected to the landscape of competition, capitalism and tourism discussed above.

If measurement of cultural value is "often expressed in terms ill-fitted to the cultural phenomena concerned" (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014: 120), then the question of what is valued, as well as how it is measured, is key to understanding the role of cultural events (particularly public funded events such as MIF). This is especially the case in times of austerity and public funding cuts. Taking the context of contemporary urban regeneration (or post-regeneration), and applying it to the context of Manchester's cultural climate, it is thus important to question how 'cultural value' is seen by those in a position to fund ongoing cultural activity, because:

> "In this competitive climate, it is easy to assume that the state's
> investment in culture is merely 'instrumental' with governments
> choosing to use their limited funds to support only those
> activities that bring demonstrable economic and social benefits
> to a nation" (McLuskie and Rumbold, 2014: 145-146)

Using the case of What Next? as an example, it can be noted that those involved in such championing of culture's role within the city can be relatively homogenous groups, made up of high ranking members of local cultural organisations, and we can consider that "[b]y its nature, a consensus about value tends to identify and reiterate the shared assumptions of a group" (McLuskie and Rumbold, 2014: 30). As with a specifically culture-focused group like What Next?, at the heart of schemes related to culture-led regeneration or city marketing there can also be a complex, yet relatively replicable network of urban professionals. City councils, local government, specialist regeneration bodies, private companies with a stake in the city such as developers, advertising and marketing agencies and cultural professionals all play their part in these increasingly complicated webs of influence to varying degrees and these are often barely visible to the citizens affected by the decision-making process. Van Ulzen's (2007) account of Rotterdam, for example, maps these webs within one city, finding particular importance in the study of those individuals who can have great influence on a city's image whether or not they have an official role in this capacity. It would appear, therefore, that contemporary uses of culture within the urban context have a greater complexity than has often been accounted for within regeneration literature.

3.2.3 Cultural Planning, Competitive Cities, Creative Class

Following perhaps less explicit exercises in the utilisation of culture within cities throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, it is now increasingly common for cultural activities within cities to be bound up with urban regeneration or development schemes, whether through the promotion of the competitive city, the desire for improved image, or the utilisation of (marketable) culture and events to boost the local economy (Evans, 2005; Foley *et al,* 2012; Jones and Evans, 2008). Whilst culture has been associated with a number of tensions with regards to its definition and accepted forms, it has been a long-standing factor in the development and promotion of cities, particularly from the 1990s onwards, and consequently "arts and culture have come to be seen as a key resource for urban regeneration" (Griffiths *et al*, 2003: 154).

This is linked both to the worldwide context of urban economic change (Garcia, 2004a), and also the UK political context of Thatcherite rhetoric which gave greater emphasis to a longer history of competitive cities. This was followed by New Labour and the continued embrace of neoliberal ideals surrounding the increased role of private sector concerns in urban policy and a greater level of public/private partnership in this respect. Additionally, a focus on social exclusion and inclusion emphasised cultural explanations (in the sense of culture as society or a way of life) for some urban problems and outcomes. One result of this has been the linking up of culture, regeneration and economy in a bid to improve a city's competitive position, where in a number of cases, large-scale events and arts festivals are explicitly utilised (Quinn, 2005). The use of cultural and, in particular, sporting events can be seen as a "desire to create spectacles" which "emphasize the consumption of experiences and pleasure" (Smith, 2007a: 86), linking with the idea that we are now in a phase of cultural planning focused around the 'creative city' (Freestone and Gibson, 2006 – see Figure 1) as explored by Harvey (1989), Landry (2000) and Zukin (1995).

- 1900s – 1910s: City as a work of art
- 1910s – 1950s: Cultural Zonation
- 1960s – 1970s: Flagship facilities
- 1960s – 1970s: Cultures of communities
- 1980s – 1990s: Culture in urban development
- 1990s – 2000s: The creative city

Figure 1: The six phases of culture and planning (Taken from Freestone and Gibson, 2006: 23)

One goal of cultural policy and the attraction of large-scale cultural events is the desire to foster a creative city. According to Pratt, the creative city can be characterised in three ways; "place marketing; novel policy process; and, cultural and creative industries" (Pratt, 2008), with many cities utilising a combination of these. The first is linked to branding as well as image-creation more generally, and is often seen as of utmost importance to post-industrial cities struggling to reshape their image from one of negativity (for example de-industrialisation, job losses, poor environmental quality) to a more positive vision for the future, whereas the latter point relates to the goal of attracting, or nurturing, a 'creative class'. Since Florida coined this term in 2002 it has received a great deal of attention from academics and policy-makers alike.

Florida's definition of who makes up this new class can be easily contested. Including "people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment... [and] a broader group of *creative professionals* in business and finance, law, health care and related fields" (Florida, 2002: 8. Original emphasis) results in an incredibly broad definition, and thus the assertions of the influence of the creative class on achieving regeneration goals are overstated. However, the idea that attracting creative people (and therefore encouraging creative clusters or milieus, and the growth of creative industries) can boost the economy has been a popular one across the UK as well as in the USA. Indeed, Florida's ideas were embraced by the Labour Party following the 2006 move of their party conference to Manchester, which Florida declared to be the UK's most creative city (Minton, 2009: 39).

In terms of UK policy, the theory of the creative class did fit neatly into much of New Labour's rhetoric of bringing people back into the cities, partly through the development of a new creative economy, with the promotion of creative quarters and cultural milieus seemingly having an influence on increased city centre populations across the nation. Alongside a focus on the creative class and cultural quarters, the rise of the competitive city suggests that cultural policy has become increasingly important to cities. As Cochrane has asserted:

> "Since cities continue to be cultural centres and culture (in its many different forms) is a vital element in shaping competitiveness, it is perhaps not surprising that cultural policy as "the conscious and deliberate manipulation of culture" (Kearns and Philo 1993, p3) has taken on an increasingly central role in attempts to promote the economic potential and social value of cities" (Cochrane, 2007: 104)

This shift towards cultural planning can be seen by the increasing popularity of culture within urban policy. However, "[d]espite the general use of cultural initiatives as catalysts for urban regeneration, the development of urban cultural policies as an element of city governance has been far slower and less consistent" (Garcia, 2004a: 312), suggesting that cultural policy remains a specialist area that is yet to penetrate broader policy aims. Evans suggests that cultural policy has become a global phenomenon, finding that more than 80 cities or city-regions produced cultural or creative policy plans between 2005 and 2008 (2009: 1010). Frith splits the variety of ways that culture has come to be used in contemporary urban policy into three particular categories (Frith 1991: 140):

- Industrial Cultural Policy (involving the local production of cultural goods for national or international consumption)
- Tourist Cultural Policy (where consumers are seen as 'imports' travelling in to experience the city)
- Cosmetic Cultural Policy (a kind of 'urban make-up' to make the city look attractive to tourists and investors, as well as local populations)

The cultural policies of cities have variously embraced all three of these, often in conjunction with one another. Industrial cultural policy, for example, can be applied to the numerous 'cultural quarter' projects that can be seen in a wide range of post-industrial cities, such as Manchester's Northern Quarter and Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter[6]. Tourist cultural policy and cosmetic cultural policy are often combined when cities plan cultural and sporting mega-events such as the Olympics or the ECOC. These policies inevitably have both explicit and implicit aims and also lead to both intended and unintended outcomes. Tourist and cosmetic cultural policy in particular tie in with aims to attract both people and investment and associated outcomes from economic benefits to the danger of disenfranchisement of local communities if the focus shifts too far towards external interests.

In the hopes of attracting larger cultural programmes, such as the ECOC, or the UK's more recent implementation of City of Culture[7] status, cities aim to promote themselves on the world stage, though smaller initiatives and events may also have such grand hopes. Others use existing cultural histories in order to draw in tourism and gain

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[6] For information regarding the differing approaches of these two cities, see Brown *et al*'s (2000) account of their local music policies

[7] Derry-Londonderry was the first UK City of Culture in 2013, with Hull due to take this title in 2017 (more information on Hull's upcoming City of Culture year can be found at http://hull2017.co.uk/)

competitive advantage, such as Liverpool's Cavern Quarter and Beatles-related tourism (Kruse, 2005), or the use of conflict histories to achieve the same ends, for example the Troubles tours in Belfast (Wiedenhoft Murphy, 2010), or tourism related to the Berlin wall (Gelbman and Timothy, 2010). There are, therefore, a number of ways in which cities have been seen to use cultural events and institutions in order to better their competitive standing, displaying a variety of levels of understanding of the seeming importance of individuality or uniqueness, with city branding and marketing forming one of these areas.

3.2.4 City Branding and Place-Marketing

Whilst it is difficult to generalise across the wide variety of cultural policy cases, Evans' conclusion that these new, post-industrial landscapes worldwide "suggest a break from the past both in terms of employment, production and spatial practices, and in urban policy responses that seek to capture, retain and brand the creative space" is certainly a reasonable one (Evans, 2009: 1004). Evans also makes the explicit suggestion that these new practices in urban policy and planning are connected to questions of city branding, in asserting that:

> "The planned city – if such a technocratic notion exists today outside of Fritz Lang's mythical 'planners who dream whilst others toiled' (*Metropolis*, 1926) – has increasingly given way to the equally self-debating branded city" (Evans, 2006: 197)

As the above quote suggests, the branding and marketing of cities is now seen as instrumental in their success and prosperity (Garcia, 2004a), with local cultural icons and events often incorporated into this brand. Despite the differences in approaches to cultural policy already discussed, a significant outcome of this push to be more competitive and creative is that cities have sought to re-brand and market themselves in order to improve their fortunes. The perceived need to re-brand the city is, in part, an exercise in distancing these urban areas from the negative perceptions associated with the scars of de-industrialisation, from large-scale unemployment to the more physical blemishes on the urban landscape, as "overcoming a perceived negative image of a city is considered vital if that city is successfully to regenerate and secure sustainable economic performance" (Peel and Lloyd, 2008: 509).

In order to stand out above their peers, cities have increasingly felt the need to present their identities in a manner which challenges past perceptions by showing off their new, post-industrial credentials, simultaneously downplaying any negative perceptions,

including any outdated modes of production and consumption. The approaches to this differ, with some cities choosing to turn these perceptions on their heads (such as Manchester with its apparent veneer of local pride in amongst the regeneration policies (Ward, 2000)) where others choose instead to brush away the negativity by ignoring its existence in the first place (like Glasgow during its year as ECOC, in which negative perceptions were simply ignored (Booth and Boyle, 1993; Paddison, 1993) – although it can be said that its advertising scheme of 'Glasgow's Miles Better' implies a negative past, if not the downsides of the present). If branding and marketing can improve perceptions of the city, it has the potential to make that city more competitive, improving its chances of attracting a creative class and much-needed inward investment.

Whilst branding is more generally associated with the advertisement of goods and services (with its pervasive and often damaging nature discussed in Klein's *No Logo* (2000)), the basic assertion that brand values include "associations, awareness, loyalty, perceived quality and, crucially, origin" (Pike, 2011: 208) is also of use when applied to the branding of locales. In particular, the specific importance attached to the origin of a branded item and the inference of the power of place gives an idea of how the potential to brand a place has been grasped by marketing-oriented councils and companies. As Ward describes:

> "As it dawned on the leaders of these [ex-industrial] cities that they were indeed peering into an economic abyss, with all the associated demographic, social and political implications, they began to seek new sources of wealth and new ways of stating their importance as places." (Ward, 1998: 186)

It is this perceived need to regain power and control over the future fortunes of the city, particularly but not solely those areas that have suffered a period of decline, that makes city branding and place marketing an attractive prospect. Within this, "the explicit branding of whole cities in a manner similar to corporate global brands is now apparent as cities strive for a distinctive tag and image that can satisfy the footloose tourist, investor, and members of the creative class alike" (Evans, 2006: 197). This process has been carried out in part through the combining of culture, urban regeneration and economic initiatives, using these in city branding but also in deeper exercises in place-making (the distinction between these two will be further explored in the chapters that follow).

3.2.5 Culture, Regeneration, Economy

It is, in part, this political context of competition and the desire to re-brand described above that has brought together culture, regeneration and economy in a bid to use culture in order to improve a city's economic circumstances. As Mommaas has asserted, "the conscious creation or nourishment of cultural sites, clusters or 'milieus' is rapidly becoming something of an archetypal instrument in the urban cultural planning toolbox" (2004: 500), with culture here understood as a wide-ranging tool with which to meet policy aims and targets. The common linkage here is a "progressive convergence between cultural and economic discourses in European approaches to urban cultural policy" (Garcia, 2004a: 313), whereby economic initiatives, impacts and outcomes are densely intertwined with the use of culture in urban regeneration.

Whilst "the important nexus between culture and economy is by no means a recent development nor a novel inclusion on the social science agenda" (Kong, 2000: 385), this economic aspect of culture has become increasingly significant, particularly in an age of public/private funding partnerships and the aforementioned competitive bidding processes often involved in cultural events. Scott, amongst others, predicted that "[a]s we enter the 21st Century, a very marked convergence between the spheres of cultural and economic development seems to be occurring" (1997: 323), and this shift towards a cultural political economy has indeed occurred (Evans, 2009; Jessop and Sum, 2013), evidenced by the finding that the cultural and creative industries contributed £76.9bn GVA to the UK economy in 2013 (DCMS, 2015). Culture here is often conceived as a city's tool, used to improve infrastructure, attract tourism and inward investment, and improve a city's brand.

The connection between culture and economy tends to be highlighted within measurement and evaluation of culture-led regeneration policies and cultural events. As culture and regeneration can be seen as synonymous within urban policy, "[t]he process often tends to be measured in economic terms, such as employment creation, multiplier effects or visitor expenditure" (Smith, 2007b: 1). There are a number of flaws in a conception of 'art for art's sake' culture, not least the sense that such a view, popularised in Victorian times, is out-dated and linked to a middle class idea of culture as improvement. However, this economic regeneration focus also underplays a number of important aspects of culture's role within cities, such as the intangible benefits that could be experienced by local communities, or the potential shift in image perception of a city that can occur through the support and promotion of particular cultural forms.

This understanding of culture as a commodity of economic value and impact can be productive in terms of the understanding and development of policy; for example, "[a] more detailed understanding of the complex exchange of cultural and economic values opens up opportunities for better informed models of urban cultural governance" (Mommaas, 2004: 510). Certainly it is impossible to treat culture and economy as separate entities, particularly in the age of service-dominated economies where culture forms a significant part of people's consumption, and increasingly cities are focusing on the development of the culture industries to help foster economic growth (Florida, 2002). However, there is also a danger that a narrow conception of culture – primarily in economic terms – can in fact hinder research and understanding of the subject. Urban regeneration literature can be guilty of giving too much weight to the economic aspects of cultural policy, whilst underplaying the importance of the social aspects (Evans, 2005; Garcia, 2004a, 2004b), with Bailey *et al* (2004) in particular indicating that the social impacts of culture in regeneration efforts are more assumed than proven. If this is the case, then it is possible to suggest that the representations of cultural cities developed and perpetuated by urban elites elicit a greater relevance with tourists and investors than with the city's own population.

3.2.6 More than the Economy: Culture's Multifaceted Benefits

Alongside policy aims which emphasise competitive standing of cities and economic foci, the arts funding situation in the UK is one in which arts organisations and local councils continue to face increasing cuts to traditional (public) revenue streams. This has led to a resurgence in the argument for the less tangible benefits of a varied cultural offer. As Deffner and Labrianidis highlight, "it is inappropriate to think of cultural policy merely in terms of the economic benefits reaped" (2005: 245), and hyperbole is used to stress this across a number of policy documents at the national level, for example in the Arts Council England's (ACE) October 2013 publication, *Great Art and Culture for Everyone*:

> "Art is about discovery of the unknown and unimagined. Artists will innovate, and push boundaries. Museums will help us understand our past and imagine our future, and libraries will be places where the hunger for knowledge is fed. Our cultural centres will be places of refuge and stimulation, trusted to be the best they can be" (ACE, 2013: 7).

Along the same lines, the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) and ACE publication of findings from their *State of the Arts* series of conferences claims that:

> "Through culture, we come to understand and articulate ourselves; the arts illuminate our inner lives, enrich our emotional world and teach us compassion. They engage us in dialogue about values; they define our national identity and our concept of citizenship."
> (RSA and ACE, 2013: 3)

Such optimistic hyperbole is insufficient as urban policy. Organisations such as ACE and the RSA, charged with the all-round promotion of the arts, are at liberty to stress such intangible benefits. Yet where local authorities need to justify cultural spend, there is a greater likelihood that the economic benefits stressed above will play a greater role in policy, often with a focus on a city's marketability and its ability to attract economic investment in a variety of forms. Thus cultural events can often be held up as positive examples in terms of their ability to attract investment, with ACE and the RSA citing MIF as an exemplar:

> "Visionary local authorities, prepared to make 'big bet' investments in culture, will continue to reap compelling rates of return, culturally and economically. For example, the Manchester International Festival suggests that when a city invests in original and inspiring cultural activity, the benefit in terms of leveraging additional investment including sponsorship, tourist income and a higher profile among visitors can be high." (Alexandra Jones in RSA and ACE, 2013: 60)

What is implied here is that events such as MIF have wide-ranging impacts on the city, in part through investment that comes as a result of an improved image.

3.2.7 Image-creation and Representation

It seems, therefore, that connecting culture's impact on the economy, on tourism and on communities is the way in which culture and cultural events have been utilised in order to shift the perceived image of the city. Consequently, to understand the cultures of cities it is imperative that we look at the ways in which a city's identity and image is formed. We have seen that in particular, urban branding or marketing and the implementation of public policy have played major roles in the ways in which we envision cities. As Zukin asserts, "[w]ith the disappearance of local manufacturing industries and periodic crises in government and finance, culture is more and more the business of cities" (Zukin, 1995), and the increased focus on the image and identity of

the city in literature and policy documents is strongly bound up with the post-industrial situation facing many cities worldwide.

In terms of image-creation both cultural and sporting events are often utilised by post-industrial cities in order to develop a greater level of symbolic capital, or a legitimised and recognised manifestation of other forms of capital (Smith, 2007a). Some see this as of particular importance in those cities lacking in traditional touristic draws such as a favourable climate, and Richards and Wilson (2007) cite Rotterdam's use of cultural events as an example. This pursuit of the creative city (Florida, 2002; Pratt, 2008) is closely tied up with processes of image-making, and those with a level of decision-making power choose from a 'stock' set of images that they perceive to be emblematic of the key to urban success. Shin and Stevens refer to this image-making as being "increasingly critical in the establishment of urban and regional identity" (2013: 1710), though there is little consideration here for questions over who decides what this identity should be. There is little doubt, however, that some urban elites would favour an image that increases a city's competitive standing, and boost its economy.

In order to assert the importance of a city through a process of (re)branding, a particular identity and image is sought in order to portray that city. Urban branding or marketing and the implementation of public policy have played major roles in affecting the ways in which we envision and experience cities, as "culture allows us to think about symbolism and the image of cities as well as a mindset that drives decision-making in particular directions" (Jones and Evans, 2008: 112). According to Peel and Lloyd (2008: 527), "[t]he branding and marketing of cities is a sophisticated activity that is acknowledged as having increasing relevance for the planning, development and management of cities" and the benefits of these activities are tied up with the image and identity of a city, where "[t]he emphasis of place marketing is increasingly on redefining - or reimagining - each individual city in ways that fit with dominant perceptions of urban success" (Cochrane, 2007: 112). This "process of re-imaging" can be seen as having one particular goal: "to make cities places where people actually *want to be*" (Jones and Evans, 2008: 163. Original emphasis) – though Jones and Evans do not specify here what kind of 'people' cities are supposed to be attracting, suggesting that this is an area for further exploration.

As expressed above, the desire to re-image the city through branding and marketing in part related to its cultural assets has become prevalent. This is essentially a process of envisioning, imagining or myth-making in order to reconstruct the urban. Both Davis

and Van Ulzen explore this suggestion, with LA and Rotterdam respectively painted by the authors as being, in part, illusions. For Van Ulzen this means that "Rotterdam the metropolis is an illusion that is deceptively real and cherished by millions of people" (2007: 11), whereas Davis positions LA by explaining that "[c]ompared to other great cities, Los Angeles may be *planned* or *designed* in a very fragmentary sense...but it is infinitely *envisioned*" (1991: 23. Emphasis in original). Jansson suggests that this theme is particularly clear in ex-industrial cities, where "the ruins of modern dreams become the sites of a new phantasmagoria" (Jansson, 2005: 1677), designed to give the illusion of urban success. Myth-making is conceived here as an important facet of reality, a process whereby a successful city is sought by the careful choosing of an appropriate narrative, picked in order to resonate with those who can contribute to the city's success.

By promoting a particular city image or identity, urban elites are seeking to project an image of success to the wider world, whereas wider urban communities may be more concerned with projecting an image that resonates with their personal experience of the city. This difference leads to the potential inability of an urban elite to fully narrate the city. Cochrane highlights a variety of "perceptions of urban success" that can be sought by culturally repositioning a city (2007: 112), such as Berlin's redefinition following the fall of the wall in 1989, whilst Ward's lengthy (yet not exhaustive) list of these markers of success contains "'flagship' development projects, flamboyant architectural and urban design statements, trade fairs, cultural and sporting spectacles, heritage, public art and much else besides" (1998: 1). It is not difficult to match any number of these examples to many post-industrial cities worldwide, whether it is cities that have bid for (and sometimes won) the Olympics or ECOC, cities which use 'starchitects' such as Frank Gehry (Barcelona) or Ian Simpson (Manchester) or those which implement large-scale public art by the likes of Anthony Gormley (Newcastle, Liverpool). If the projected image of a city is indeed an envisioned myth, however, questions may be asked as to the legitimacy or authenticity of these constructions.

The rising popularity of the brand image of a city as a means to improve its fortunes adds yet more complexity to the question of urban culture(s), as culture is increasingly seen as a commodity that can be manipulated to form a favourable (and profitable) identity. In order to further understand this process, attention must be paid to the decisions made by urban elites in terms of what types of culture are supported and promoted, why these decisions are made, and what kind of impact this has not only on the city's success, but also the city's residents. There is also room here to consider

whether, despite the ubiquity of culture within urban regeneration and policy contexts, there are a number of critiques to be made of the position so many cities find themselves in, and the practices they choose to pursue.

3.3 Critiques

Although the take-up of culture-led regeneration in the UK and beyond has been widespread, there are a number of critiques that can be made of this trend. There have been a number of flaws and even failures in urban cultural policy. The attraction of the creative class through cultural quarters and urban regeneration policy can be said to have a limited repertoire, as a focus on certain types of manageable and marketable culture can obscure wider practices and issues. This raises issues around the legitimacy and authenticity of the culture appropriated, including questions around whether this appropriation constitutes elite concerns, how effective a focus on economy and tourism is, and the potential over-estimation of the benefits of culture-led regeneration. There are also, however, questions that can be asked of the critical and empirical writing within this area of urban regeneration, planning and geography literature, because adherence to trends in urban policy and decision-making can neglect the richness that may be derived from in-depth study. These two issues are taken here in turn, before we move on to consider the contribution of this study and the ways in which it can further debate around culture's role in contemporary cities by examining whether contemporary culture-led regeneration goes beyond place-marketing to a more holistic idea of place-making.

3.3.1 Legitimacy, authenticity and the prioritisation of elite concerns

The overarching idea within many cultural policies favoured by many UK cities is that, when used as a part of a broader regeneration agenda, cultural facilities and events improve the image of a city, making it more likely to attract investment in terms of new businesses and increased tourist numbers. Unsurprisingly this idea leads to a concept of culture that is easily recognisable and 'sold' to an audience, thus "[t]reating the city as a private business, accountable to property developers and retailers rather than local electors, has huge implications for public life, public culture and democracy" (Minton, 2009: 42). The issue of authenticity (or the potential lack thereof) within the 'culture as tool' model as highlighted by Davis (1990) and Van Ulzen (2007) is sometimes not given enough weight within urban cultural policy. (Although it is a difficult concept to pin down, Scott emphasises the importance of authenticity:

> "creativity is not something that can simply be imported into the city on the backs of peripatetic computer hackers, skateboarders, gays and assorted bohemians but must be organically developed through the complex interweaving of relations of production, work and social life in specific urban contexts" (Scott, 2006: 15)

The language used here is explicitly critical of Florida's 'creativity index' (Florida, 2002), and policy-makers who wish to develop the 'creative city' have found that using a checklist of individuals to attract and businesses to encourage is not a definite recipe for success. Early examples of cultural policy in the UK, for example Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) may have been developed before there was a trend for cultural quarters but Moss (2002) notes how the narrow parameters of Sheffield's policy (a focus solely on cultural production rather than a balance between production and consumption) contributed to the failure of the area to make a real, lasting impact on the city at that time. The CIQ long remained a fairly quiet and underdeveloped area of the city centre despite its proximity to the railway station, Sheffield Hallam University and the city centre, with the closure of the National Centre for Popular Music proving emblematic of the area's problems. Jayne, too, has comprehensively explored this in his various studies of Stoke-on-Trent and the city's attempts to build cultural quarters that are not based around existing, organic structures (Jayne, 2004). Moreover, a focus on attracting a certain type of individual, industry or 'scene' is often tantamount to specifically excluding those seen to have a negative impact, or the 'wrong' cultural practices, through, for example, the privatisation of previously public space or exclusionary architecture to deter practices such as skateboarding (Millie, 2008; Minton, 2009).

Beyond the perceived success of culture-led schemes are a number of other criticisms. For example, the shifts in image that are sought by the holders of power within cities cannot be seen to be uniformly appreciated by the population, with concerns often arising that the highly branded image of the city can focus on its commodification and the appropriation of a particularly selected form of culture, begging the question whose culture is being supported. As Millie states, "[i]n effect, the untidy are removed or hidden from view so as to beatify the city", creating a "safe and sanitised streetscape, acceptable to the shopping, business, leisure and residential majority" (2008: 387). This does not always go against local cultures or sub-cultures, but Millie's example of the city of Bristol's acceptance of graffiti as long as it's considered to be 'art' in the form of the work of Banksy (whose work is now so societally acceptable that he has his own 'coffee table' book Wall and Piece (Banksy, 2005)) shows how perceptions of acceptability are

important in the way the image of a city is portrayed. In reference to Rotterdam, Van Ulzen (2007), like Davis, refers to the 'official' culture as supported by a city's elite not being 'real' culture, whilst Davis also expresses concern about 'corporate multiculturalism', referring to the practice as "an attitude that patronises imported diversity whilst ignoring its own backyard" (1990: 81).

The inescapable focus on a city's cultural credentials as a way of advertising an acceptable and marketable image leads some to articulate a general distrust of cultural policy, with Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005) referring to the phenomenon as 'bourgeois urbanism'. In their research on Toronto, Goonewardena and Kipfer claim that this phenomenon of clean, sharp branding has "absorbed subcultural practices and socio-political aspirations into dominant processes of capitalist urbanization and popular milieus shaped by elite and new middle-class fractions" (2005: 671), suggesting that the appropriation of culture by urban elites is explicitly connected to processes of gentrification within the urban realm. Davis also highlights this contention, suggesting that where elements of gentrification such as increased property value take precedence over the more simple benefits of cultural commodities, city centres (in Davis' case, Los Angeles) are "culturally hollowed out" (1990: 78).

This cultural hollowing out links to the sanitisation of the city that can result from this replicated branding (Hannigan, 1998; Millie, 2008; Zukin, 1995), brought about by the selective use of certain elements of local culture, and is connected to the concept of Disneyfication drawn from American contexts. Hannigan has commented upon this, explaining that "[p]aradoxically, the more cities seek to differentiate themselves on the basis of distinctive fantasy themes, the more they resemble one another with the same line-up of attractions" (Hannigan, 1998: 4), be these theme parks, theatres, sports stadia or a variety of other places and activities. This is generally seen to be a popular – if controversial – model of city-boosting as it creates "a metropolis which ignores the reality of homelessness, unemployment, social injustice and crime, while eagerly transforming sites and channels of public expression into 'promotional spaces'" (ibid).

The outcome of these similar paths of branding, marketing, and 'visions' for the future has often been unexpected (at least to the policy makers), where surprisingly generic aspects of the city are highlighted in a potentially misguided attempt to stand out from the crowd (Peel and Lloyd, 2008). This can be seen in the number of new developments with 'one' or 'first' in their names; for example the Liverpool One shopping centre, or Manchester City Council's move to new premises on the newly created 'Number One,

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First Street'. Difficulties arise in this replicable branding of a city due to the fact that each city has multiple images, multiple representations and therefore "mobilising consensus around a pooled image then represents a significant challenge" (Peel and Lloyd, 2008: 511). On a smaller scale this can be possible, particularly when marketing an area of a city based on its history. Examples include the attractions centred around Liverpool's Albert Dock (Rodwell, 2008) or Dundee's waterfront (Peel and Lloyd, 2008), but few cities seem to attempt to develop a coherent, city-wide image that can easily be recognised and branded (although, as will be discussed at greater length, Manchester has gone against this trend, from the establishment of Marketing Manchester in 1996 to its more recent attempt from 2007 onwards to re-brand the city as 'Manchester: Original Modern' with artist Peter Saville at the helm as the city's 'Creative Director' (see Ward, 2000, amongst others)).

The issues have a number of effects on cities, with the convergence of themes warned of by Hannigan (1998) echoing Degen and Garcia's suggestion that in the case of Barcelona, "[p]olitical elites have tended to transfer practices of urban regeneration from one context to another, forgetting that urban development is a deeply historical and place-specific phenomenon" (2012: 1023). There is thus an issue faced by cities that win prestigious cultural titles (Degen and Garcia refer specifically to Barcelona's Olympic success), as well as those that opt for culture-led regeneration more generally: that of the necessity for uniqueness and authenticity in order to avoid "serial monotony, blandscapes, placelessness" (Smith, 2007b: 7), which may not assist in a city's goals, economic or otherwise.

A number of tensions can be seen here surrounding the packaged, sanitised nature of urban culture when it is sold as a symbol of success as part of a city's brand, with Fessler Vaz and Berenstein Jacques warning of "the belief that visibility is equivalent to success", when the mere visibility of a brand can underplay recurrent trends in city branding such as gentrification and spectacularisation (2006: 246). Additionally, "[b]randing seeks to create a unified version, […] but unlike the branded farm animal, ownership cannot be reduced in this way." (Evans, 2006: 202). Evans suggests that despite the popularity of urban branding, the kinds of pitfalls expressed by Hannigan (1998) or Fessler Vaz and Berenstein Jacques (2006) point towards a need to understand that such exercises are no replacement for spatial planning or other forms of city management. As with the utilisation of culture as a tool of urban regeneration or urban policy, the key here is that there cannot be a simple, one size fits all solution. There is an

uneasy relationship between city branding or marketing and urban culture, where questions of authenticity arise surrounding who chooses what image is portrayed, and what those decisions consist of.

3.3.2 The focus on economy and tourism

One common factor in the choice of image portrayal by cities is the tendency to focus on projecting an image of the city that will be economically beneficial and attractive to tourists and investors. Cox and O'Brien have decried cultural policies and culture-led regeneration as being tantamount to gentrification and the pursuit of a neoliberal agenda (2012: 94), suggesting in their study of Liverpool that "[a]longside the physical impact, the very act of operationalizing culture opens up a space for contestation: whose culture will be represented and how?" (Cox and O'Brien, 2012: 96). In addition to issues of authenticity there is a problem with an international model of urban revitalisation that "addresses basically the international tourist – not the local inhabitant –, and demands a certain world standard, a standardised type of urban space" (Fessler Vaz and Berenstein Jacques, 2006: 248). Expanding upon this, Fessler Vaz and Berenstein Jacques argue that "[i]n contrast to the inhabitant, the tourist does not appropriate the space – he [sic] simply crosses it. In this case, culture as the expression of a city's 'identity' is used as an urban instrument mainly to attract tourists" (ibid.).

It is not just the tourist whose attention is sought here however, but also the potential of attracting members of the creative class to the city, in the hope of fostering further growth of a creative or cultural economy. There is the potential therefore for economically-driven exercises in the co-opting of culture into regeneration to engender tensions within local communities, leaving them feeling disenfranchised by narrow conceptions of culture which may not reflect the types of culture or cultural event that they see as fundamental elements of the city (Shin and Stevens, 2013: 1711). Additionally, evidence suggests that "[d]espite the advocacy, causal links between creative clusters (milieus and producers) and improved innovation and competitiveness have proved to be elusive" (Evans, 2009: 1016). This is one of the areas in which Florida's work is reductive, focusing on the ways in which creative or 'bohemian' people somehow bring an inevitable economic and competitive improvement to an area. Despite evidence that economic outcomes of culture-led regeneration may not be as positive as policy-makers would hope, there remains a reliance upon economic factors, particularly in the evaluation of cultural events (Quinn, 2005; Richards and Wilson, 2004). Whilst this is understandable due to the relative ease of measurement of

economic impact (ticket sales, economic value of media column inches etc.), such a focus does little to develop an understanding of the way in which culture and cultural events impact on some of the other areas discussed here, such as a shift in a city's image. Many of these less tangible elements are instead left as assumed benefits.

3.3.3 The danger of assumed benefits

For all of the focus – indeed, in some cases, reliance – on culture's inclusion within urban regeneration programmes in recent decades, we can see that there are a number of flaws, from those outlined above to the seeming assumption that culture-led regeneration can solve a plethora of ills:

> "[C]ulture and creativity are seen as having a multitude of economic benefits: market a city; attract creative people (in some versions foster creativity), and thus revive local economies. In addition culture and creativity can have the following social benefits: tackle social exclusion; nurture community; develop creative skills and tackle unemployment" (Connolly, 2013: 168)

As Connolly writes, culture, when used as part of planning or regeneration schemes or rhetoric, suffers from a great weight of responsibility (also suggested by Miles, 2005). The (perceived) success stories of culture-led regeneration, from Barcelona to Glasgow, can lead to a number of assumed impacts where "[t]he underlying assumption is that participation in cultural activities will encourage self-esteem and confidence, improve individual skills, generate social capital and social bonds and lay the ground for participation in economic activity, thus linking to growth creation" (Colomb, 2011: 80). There are, however, a number of flaws in these assumptions, from a lack of acknowledgement of the failings inherent in even the most widely praised success stories (such as the criticisms surrounding Glasgow's ECOC year and its failure to cultivate lasting social impact (Connolly, 2013)) to the lack of evidence to show the softer impacts of culture referenced by Colomb (2011) such as the building of social capital through engagement with culture and cultural events. Indeed it is apparent that opportunities to benefit from such impacts are often missed, with "the accumulation of intangible assets, such as human, social and cultural/symbolic capital" left unrealised (Tavano Blessi *et al*, 2012: 399).

Whilst the use of culture to advance economic aims is by no means the only conceptualisation of culture used within cities, the tendency towards the appropriation of culture that is beneficial for the economy or tourist industry is an issue for regeneration, and is often embodied in specific cultural policies, developed in order to

get the most out of culture, with the utilisation of "'culture' as a tool to make up for the failures of the labour market, of the education system and of the welfare state" (Colomb, 2011: 95). Once again, this points to a weight of expectation upon culture to alter the fortunes of cities – a difficult task if we accept that "[c]ulture is subtle and complex in nature, its concepts are fluid and abstract" (Young, 2006: 55).

The lack of evidence of the benefits suggested by Connolly (2013) is in part due to a common assumption of 'trickle-down', in which a benefit for the relatively privileged minority is perceived to automatically ensure a positive knock-on effect for the majority – the idea, for example, that increased tourist visits to a city centre will result in further employment opportunities in the service sector as demand for services such as shops, bars and restaurants increases (Colomb, 2011). There is, however, little evidence of these trickle-down benefits where culture-led regeneration is concerned. In Evans' study of policy trends, for example, there is evidence of a 'vision' of "perceived social and environmental benefits through realising...trickle-down effects and improved quality of life" (Evans, 2009: 1008), though these trickle-down effects are, as they tend to be in any policy area, difficult to prove, and also seem to be counteracted by evidence of falling social mobility in the UK (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009), including widening social and economic gaps in specific locales. Furthermore, there is a suggestion that socio-economic impacts in particular may be negative rather than simply lacking (Colomb, 2011). For example the situation of Glasgow where "[t]he espoused economic successes of Glasgow stand in stark contrast to contemporary health and poverty statistics which suggest that the approach adopted by the city has resulted in social and economic polarization" (Connolly, 2013: 169).

Peck (2005) also reminds us that these policies – and urban regeneration initiatives more generally – are tied up in processes of neoliberalism and its associated rhetoric of inter-city competition and place-marketing, where the driver is unlikely to be benefits of social equality. The findings of Evans' aforementioned (2009) study give weight to Peck's argument, showing 'economic development and employment' as being the two dominant objectives in the creative policy rationales studied, with 'regeneration' coming in third, 'tourism/events' in fifth place, 'city branding' in sixth, and 'social access' lagging behind in seventh. Whilst there are clear reasons behind the dominance of economic development goals, Evans' findings highlight where the levels of expectation of culture lie and help us to position or locate some of the issues already discussed relating to the authenticity or legitimacy of culture.

The successes and failures of cultural policy and culture-led regeneration discussed here serve to show the lack of an effective 'one size fits all' model. Whilst there are positives to be drawn from an increased focus on the cultural lives of cities (such as increased leisure and employment opportunities for residents or the potential for inward investment to benefit the city), it is important to be aware of the limitations and pitfalls that can be seen in policy and practice to date. Goonewardena and Kipfer, for example, posit that "policies stemming from 'do-or-die' city branding exercises and 'creative city' musings…not only now dominate...but also reduce [the spaces'] substance to a superficial - and therefore easily marketable - conception of cultural diversity" (2005: 672). The scathing manner in which this is referred to as a "'food and festivals' brand of aestheticized difference" (ibid.) serves as a reminder that much urban cultural policy comprises exercises in branding and smoothing the surfaces rather than addressing deeper urban shifts, making further understanding of the practices behind city branding and imaging necessary in order to explore the ways in which cities represent themselves.

So, if we accept this range of flaws and difficulties seemingly inherent in the use of culture as an urban regeneration tool, and a tool that continues to be used in a post-regeneration era, why is this complex facet of urban life worthy of further exploration? As Young states, quite simply, "culture expresses like nothing else the connective in life" (2006: 55), and this intuition is played out both in policy and in schemes of branding and marketing in cities, in ways that need examination in order to step beyond the taken-for-granted assumptions surrounding culture's benefits that have been discussed here.

3.3.4 Gaps in the literature

What can be seen in the discussion of the literature above is that whilst many empirical studies focus on the outcome of culture's use and appropriation in the urban context in terms of the effects that culture and cultural events have on a city's profile and economy, there is little in the way of work that explores the practices and processes involved. In discussing Charles Landry's work on the creative city, Pratt suggests that Landry's "thesis is not about consumption, but about process. It is about an inclusive and participatory city where arts and culture are a means and a practice of place-making and living" (Pratt, 2008: 35). Yet it is this practice of arts and culture as place-making that has been given little attention in studies of culture and urban regeneration to date. Landry may open *The Art of City Making* with the caveat that "[t]here is no simplistic, ten-point plan that can be mechanically applied to guarantee success in any eventuality"

(2006: 1), yet his theory that "good city-making leads to the highest achievement of human culture" (2006: 5) remains reminiscent of Florida's restrictive idea of what a 'good' or 'creative' city may be. Regardless of such sweeping statements, this idea of culture's role in the practice of place-making is a useful way of moving beyond some of the outcome-orientated work which dominates studies in urban regeneration, particularly when framed within a contemporary cultural value context that allows us to explore what is valued and why.

3.4 Contribution

An in-depth case study such as that being pursued here allows for the questioning of culture's role in creating, reinforcing and perpetuating dominant representations of the urban, thereby offering an opportunity to challenge such representations as, in part, constructions of an urban elite (although it should be added that this elite could themselves be considered a construction of wider processes at the city level and beyond). Such constructions can offer a restrictive view of cities, in which an outward-looking focus on tourism and inward investment subsumes any inward-looking representations that may provide greater authenticity in this age of urban branding. Whilst the success of cultural events such as MIF have been held up as examples of the worth of culture in today's uncertain climate of reduced funding (for example in the RSA and ACE report quoted above), the self-congratulatory tendencies of arts institutions and local councils alike mask the ongoing issue that culture-led regeneration, and the spectacularisation of the post-industrial city, does not automatically lead to trickle-down benefits for the wider community, instead offering a sanitised and marketable image posing as reality.

The system of urban elites involved in these processes tie together the regeneration of a city, its policies and its branding. This does not just mean the councillors and elected officials responsible for the policy process, but other influential individuals. From creative professionals, to local businesses with extensive investment in a city (in Manchester CityCo is a prime example[8]), these groups display a level of power within the city. Although each 'group' may claim to have the primary responsibility for the development (physical and otherwise) of the city, "it is no one person's job at present to connect the agendas, ways of thinking, knowledge and skill bases" that are required for this role (Landry, 2006: 7), with potential for tensions to then arise as to the priorities of a city's development. Within the literature explored above there is scant attention paid

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[8] CityCo is an independent company, established in order to 'manage and market' Manchester's city centre. More information can be found at cityco.com/

to some of these issues of the processes and practices involved in the reimaging of the city and who is involved in them. This offers an opportunity to build upon work centred on culture's role in urban regeneration by conducting research that centres around some of the complex webs of urban elites implicated in the construction of dominant urban representations. Exploring this through a cultural studies frame enables the research presented here to address some of the gaps in the literature noted above, incorporating understandings of social constructionism, power and capitals into an area more traditionally concerned with policy measurement.

This study primarily adheres to ideas of social constructionism. Particularly when discussing the central theme of culture, the social constructionist idea that "[t]he ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific" (Burr, 2003: 3-4) enables us to view culture as something that changes both over time and across space. This helps to situate culture as something which cannot be defined in a concrete manner in that it cannot be linked to an external truth, and is instead positioned through individual and collective social processes. These ideas such as culture are things that "we take for granted as given, fixed and immutable, whether in ourselves or in the phenomena we experience, [but] can upon inspection be found to be socially derived and socially maintained" (Burr, 2003: 45). This social derivation links to the idea that the process of producing and promoting culture is bound up with power relations (Burr, 2003).

The research here questions how certain actors (including cultural elites) play a role in defining how a city is represented because they have the power to do so, excluding some cultural forms or groups of people in the process. Power, in particular, plays a role in culture's use and appropriation within cities – primarily, who has the power to decide what forms of culture are used, supported or promoted within the city. As Johnson *et al* state, "[c]ulture is always a setting of and for power, just as power is a setting of and for culture" (2004: 135), and it is therefore imperative we be explicit when referring to and exploring the power relations involved here.

3.4.1 Furthering the Debate

Throughout this exploration of culture within cities a clear theme is that those with a level of power over the urban see a 'marketable' culture as an important way of improving a city. Whilst marketable culture encompasses an array of popular cultural pursuits such as football, culture-led regeneration can be said to be closely tied up with

the kind of 'high' culture associated with the middle class or urban elites (Jones and Evans, 2008), as these types of culture are seen as recognisable symbols of a post-industrial, 'vibrant' city that can attract tourists, creative individuals and inward investment, building a more competitive city. However, the success stories that some cities have written according to this definition of culture, and the predominantly economic focus of much academic study within this area, obscures a number of other issues and areas of interest. As Garcia argues:

> "There is also a need to keep arguing in favour of a cultural agenda that is not necessarily subsumed to economic imperatives. For this, it is critical to further develop techniques to evaluate cultural impacts and legacies as an alternative to the more established and clearly predominant techniques to assess immediate economic impacts" (Garcia, 2004a: 325)

If we are to focus upon these cultural impacts and legacies, as opposed to conducting a study with an economic focus, it is necessary to further explore the ways in which cities are represented through culture and cultural events, problematising the process of outward-looking, tourist-focused cultural policy and unpacking the representations of the city that flow from such approaches. Much of the literature discussed here has suggested that culture in the urban context is highly commodified (Garcia, 2004a; Goonewardena and Kipfer, 2005), and yet by exploring culture's conceptualisation it is clear that it has multiple meanings rather than simply being conceived as a city's tool. Cultural policy also suggests this multiplicity, with intended outcomes that encompass the culture-regeneration-economy link and the desire for a strong city brand, yet also (although to a lesser extent) stress the need for cohesion as well as competitiveness (Evans, 2009).

Regeneration schemes, urban policy and branding exercises are all looking for success in the form of an image or representation of the city that is marketable and unique, but also uniform enough to package and sell; a representation that can assist in place-making and place-marketing. Not only does the focus on economy neglect the importance of social impacts, but the drive towards the marketable city obscures stories and realities that are as much a part of urban life as the sanitised, 'fantasy' versions of high cultural consumption (Davis, 1991; Hannigan, 1998; Millie, 2008). The role of powerful urban elites in the decision-making processes behind the building of symbolic capital through the promotion of a particular city representation is underplayed, and urban regeneration literature should demand a greater level of critique around the choices those with power make about a city's perceived identity and how this relates to questions of value. There

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is an opportunity here to focus attention more specifically on the process and practices of how cities use culture as part of an elite project to project a successful image to the world. In particular, there is the potential for urban festivals to provide a useful tool for examining culture within cities, because as Foley *et al* have asserted:

> "Events are of local, national and international importance. They are important signifiers of personal, community, national and globalised identity. They represent opportunities for celebration and commiseration, for rejoicing and for resisting. They are political and politicised, ritualistic and regenerative…Events touch everyone in one way or another, yet understandings of their impacts and outcomes remain underdeveloped." Foley *et al*, 2012: 1

It is within this multifaceted – and sometimes contested – arena that this research is situated. By adopting a cultural studies approach that is concerned with power relations, it aims to explore how cities are represented through cultural events, by whom, and for what purposes. It is apparent that issues of power and social, cultural and symbolic capital are tied up in this bringing together of culture and urban regeneration (these forms of capital are discussed further in the following chapter), and yet these issues are often pushed to the background in favour of studies which display a greater focus on the effects that cultural institutions and events can have on tourism and the economy. The close examination of one particular event (MIF) allows the foregrounding of these issues via examination of the practices and micro-processes involved in the creation of a representation of the city. The following chapter develops a number of key concepts into a framework within which the research is situated, expanding upon these questions of power and capital in order to build a theoretical approach which underpins the mixed-methods, ethnographic methodology that is detailed in Chapter 5.

4 Framework

4.1 Introduction

> "What does representation have to do with 'culture': what is the
> connection between them? To put it simply, culture is about
> 'shared meanings'" (Hall, 1997a: 1)

In exploring culture's role in representing Manchester, this research seeks to uncover a number of the 'shared meanings' that Hall references here, using ethnographic techniques to explore and critique these meanings and their origins. It is therefore this connection between culture and representation that forms the basis of the framework that underpins the research, a connection which has been drawn out in the discussion of the literature in the previous chapter, alongside the link between themes around culture and urban regeneration and those of place (discussed in terms of the existence of both place-marketing and place-making activities within cities). The purpose here is to study both the processes behind the production of representations of the city, and the nature or manifestation of these representations themselves, as seen through cultural events.

As seen on page 5 in Chapter 1, the research questions this work is based on centre around the ways in which visions and understandings of Manchester are formed through MIF. They examine how and whether certain practices articulate these understandings, as well as examining the elite nature of MIF and its positioning within Manchester's contemporary narrative, in order to further understandings of the use and value of culture within cities. It considers, therefore, who produces representations of Manchester through its culture, what 'shared meanings' are in evidence here and the contested nature of these meanings including their relation to discussions of cultural value. The questions posed here involve a balance between the representations of the city that are evident, and the practices through which these representations are developed and articulated, taking in the production and reproduction of city identity through MIF and the (branded) city of Manchester.

In order to answer the research questions, "we must consider both what is to be understood ('the urban') and the ways in which we actually do understand ('urban theory')" (Byrne, 2001: 23). Whilst the previous chapter focused predominantly on 'the urban' and the literature surrounding the growth and development of culture's use within urban regeneration, we turn here to the ways in which we can understand such processes. As explored in Chapter 3, there is now a widespread understanding that the branding and marketing of cities plays a distinct role within urban regeneration

initiatives (Evans, 2006; Ward, 1998 amongst others), yet explorations of the (re)imaging of cities do not tend to explore the ways in which these representations are developed and perpetuated, or indeed question whether such activity reaches beyond the purview of place-marketing and branding. This research therefore offers an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the development of these representations, particularly through exploring the nature of place identity and image through the power relations and associated social and cultural capital – or social networks and group membership, dispositions and cultural goods (Bourdieu, 1986) – that play into the running of cultural events.

This chapter begins with a discussion of different understandings of culture and cultural value, situating this study within the tradition of cultural studies and urban regeneration. Having established the links between culture and identity, the concepts of urban identity and place-making are then explored in further detail. As it is centred around power relations and the ways in which these are played out within social spaces or 'fields', the work of Bourdieu is used to explore the ways in which urban identity is shaped in part through culture. Using the Bourdieusean concept of habitus as a lens to consider the everyday workings of power and capital, the idea of city identity is discussed and distinguished from the concept of habitus. Finally, conclusions are offered as to the significance of the connections between culture, representation and identity, and how these connect to the idea of a sense of place.

The purpose of this framing is to suggest that through concepts of power and capital, we can begin to understand how particular city narratives are dictated, how this relates to cultural value, and how such levels of power and capital may enable the exercise of elite projects within a contemporary urban context. Within this 'field' of Manchester's cultural landscape (considering 'field' in a Bourdieusian sense as a situation within which cultural production occurs according to a number of social conditions (Bourdieu, 1993)), questions are raised as to the potential of an identity of the city, referring in particular to the articulation of certain visions of the city through the practices displayed within cultural events and the (sometimes unconscious) drives behind these. In the case of MIF, culture is a means of displaying a city's (dominant) narrative and of cementing it as a perceived city identity. In focusing upon these themes, exploration is made of the ways in which culture is bound up with identity, image, a sense of place and ideas of place-making. An argument is therefore made that there are ways in which urban identity can be articulated through culture. It is from this position that this chapter

concludes by suggesting that we can consider culture as marketing, culture as ethos, and culture as identity to examine the ways in which culture is utilised in contemporary urban regeneration and policy and how issues of power and capital affect the ways in which this is played out in the case of Manchester in particular.

4.2 Uses of Culture, Cultural Value and Cultural Studies

As shown in the previous chapter, within the context of urban regeneration and contemporary urban development, culture tends to be understood as art, and events broadly related to art as well as sporting events. Given the focus within this research upon an arts festival, this is an important definition. However, there are also questions that arise around the culture of cities, their nature and identity. Therefore 'culture' here goes beyond art and incorporates, to an extent, the conceptualisations of culture as a way of life considered by Williams (1961). This study draws from cultural studies in order to help understand the ways in which identity is bound up with and articulated through culture, with this manifesting itself in particular ways in the highly branded, post-industrial city.

4.2.1 A Cultural Studies Approach

Through the study and analysis of the ways in which a representation of the city is constructed through its cultural events, this research focuses on how the practices and processes of the development and dissemination of such events relate to, and reinforce, (dominant) representations of the city. The work is broadly situated within the cultural studies tradition, particularly the discursive approach to cultural studies (as opposed to the semiotic approach). Where a semiotic approach focuses upon the unpacking of language as a series of signs (Barker, 2004), the discursive approach:

> "is more concerned with the *effects and consequences* of representation – its 'politics'. It examines not only how language and representation produce meaning, but how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practiced and studied" (Hall, 1997a: 6. Emphasis in original.)

This is apt here, as it enables a consideration of practice, action and representation. Looking more closely at representations in particular, Hall refers to three accounts or theories of representation:

- Reflective (A reflection of an existing meaning which is 'out there')

- Intentional (Language as expressing the intended meaning of the speaker)

- Constructionist (meaning as constructed in and through language. This can then be split into semiotic (Saussurian) or discursive (Foucauldian) approaches)

  (Hall, 1997b: 15)

The particular contribution of this discursive, constructionist study is the close emphasis on the practices behind the representations of the city developed and perpetuated through cultural events, a position afforded by the embedded nature of the fieldwork, which took place in the case study institution of MIF over a period of 15 months. This immersive and embedded period of research has enabled close examination of an institution directly linked with Manchester's project of contemporary repositioning and rebranding (which has otherwise been predominantly led by Manchester City Council), in which elements of the city's past and present are being used to articulate its potential futures to a wider audience. This period of immersion has allowed for a greater focus on the practices behind cultural production and urban regeneration, thus offering additional weight to a field often characterised by work on outcomes. It is through this ethnographic approach that it has been possible to use the position as researcher in order to examine the processes of social construction that occur within a project of contemporary cultural urban regeneration, shifting an often-assumed element of urban regeneration processes to one that is actually observed and critiqued.

In order to explore the construction of representations that have been developed by MIF and Manchester's cultural and civic bodies more generally, a number of theories and concepts are discussed within this constructionist frame, including theories of power and capital but also encompassing concepts of place-making and a sense of place that underpin much work in the fields of urban regeneration and human geography. All of these concepts and ideas are considered with the aim of understanding the representations of the city through the micro-processes and practices of cultural events that lie at the heart of this study. There are undeniably a number of tensions here, in particular the dual focus on representations of the city and their production, but also the simultaneous understanding of both imaginaries of the city (the way in which it is envisioned and then marketed by urban elites) alongside the concrete practices and mechanisms within the city that allow for and contribute to these imaginaries (for example the political landscape of the city).

This study therefore incorporates both an understanding of culture as art (appropriate given the focus on cultural festivals and the art forms presented within them) as well as an element of culture as everyday life (which is required in the ethnographic exploration of day-to-day activity). These two understandings are also of use in considering the theme of cultural value that forms a key part of this research. The phrase 'cultural value' is key in much contemporary work that focuses upon the importance placed upon forms of culture. Whilst this is usually understood to be culture as art rather than culture as everyday life, this second definition is valuable in examining the practices and processes through which certain forms of culture come to be valued. As McLuskie and Rumbold have noted,

> "The idea of culture as a symbiosis between a way of life and its expression offers a powerful image of value in practice where the cultural objects are so integrated into the way of life that it is impossible to separate the two and no distinction is made between a canon of valued content and the activities of the groups who value them": and "imagined synergy" (McLuskie and Rumbold, 2014: 86)

This pluralised understanding of culture fits within a cultural studies tradition, and this "imagined synergy" that McLuskie and Rumbold refer to, is a useful way of considering the relationship between culture and those who have the ability to construct or promote its value. In short, "[t]hings don't *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems of concepts and signs" (Hall, 1997b: 25. Emphasis in original). This constructionist theory of representation has been key in understanding the practices through which representations are produced in staging cultural events; particularly in the exploration and understanding of seemingly dominant and long-lasting 'traits' of the city that appear to be accepted and promoted by cultural elites. This does not equate to a denial of the physical existence of the material world, but acts as an acknowledgement that social practice and discourse are the means through which we make meaning of this world (Hall, 1997b). Culture and cultural events act as an enduring and powerful method of meaning-making embraced by urban and cultural elites (amongst others), thus forming a connection between the representation of the city and the practices through which this is created.

4.2.2 Culture and Identity

Ideas around city identity, imagined cities and city brands all contribute to imaginaries of the city that are expressed through cultural events. Elsewhere in this research, a discussion of the political landscape of the city, the networks of urban elites that

contribute to the decision-making processes and the background of contemporary arts funding within the UK all help to give context to these urban imaginaries. Through the following discussions of culture, capital and power, the core aim is to consider whether Manchester embodies a 'Mancunian identity', or sense of place, and what role cultural events play in the development or perpetuation of such an identity, articulating the city's contemporary urban narrative through practices and micro-processes.

The literature explored in the previous chapter clearly shows that culture is part of an urban regeneration landscape, yet this connection stretches beyond that of materiality. As Byrne states, "Culture matters. It matters as a component of the political economy of post-industrial cities, given the significance of cultural industries in those cities – the significance of the production of signs rather than material commodities" (Byrne, 2001: 25). In other words, whilst culture forms part of the material landscape of post-industrial cities, it has meaning beyond this – a meaning that is bound up with connections between material culture and identity. In attempting to understand the ways in which culture is bound up with place identity, we can consider that "[i]dentity is what distinguishes place from place or city from city. It is what provides people with a broader, richly layered sense of place and what connects them to it, giving them a stake and a sense of ownership" (Murray, 2001: 10). There are numerous ways in which connection can be made with place, including the cultural activity and events that occur within place.

It is important, therefore, to relate these representations to material social practices as well as considering the representations themselves. A grounding in social constructionism offers a way of understanding the importance and relevance of the practices and processes behind the representations of the city. Suggesting that meaning and identity are constructed through social practices, it allows this facet to be foregrounded within this research and incorporates an understanding of culture as everyday life alongside the study of culture as art.

4.3 Urban Identity and Place-Making

One way of understanding culture's role within a contemporary urban landscape is through the ways in which ideas around urban identity contribute to practices of place-making. As Healey suggests, "places and place making are deeply social and political concepts and activities in which meanings and values are created in interaction with lived experience" (Healey, 2010: 33). Policies of place-making in urban regeneration and

contemporary development aim to emphasise the meaning and value that can be gained through culture. Healey (2010) identifies a number of cities that have practiced successful place-making, from Georgian Edinburgh to Barcelona in the 1990s. It is therefore important to pay greater attention to place-making and place-marketing, and the way in which they differ: with place-making making more claims towards a deeper level of meaning and value, and place-marketing focusing more upon inward investment. Examining these helps us understand cultural activities within particular social and political contexts and the particular power relations at play.

4.3.1 Identity and Place: claims to place-making

Despite the downturn in urban regeneration policy and Area Based Initiatives since 2010 (as discussed in Chapter 2), the ongoing use of place-making rhetoric at the local level emphasises the importance of place as "an idea of the significance of place and of the interactions which are set within place, an assertion of place as a basis for holistic lived experience, and a notion of the distinctiveness of 'ways of life' in different places" (Byrne, 2001: 69). Offering a simple distinction between space and place, Madanipour explains that "[w]hereas space is open and is seen as an abstract expanse, place is a particular part of that expanse which is endowed with meaning by people" (1996: 158). Cresswell asserts that "[w]hen humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place" (2015: 16), as meaning-making in this way comes through a level of personal attachment. In ascribing meaning to place, people (both individually and collectively) are contributing to its identity, or rather to a series of multiple identities whereby different groups and individuals prioritise different meanings of the city, leading to the potential for struggle around which of these identities becomes dominant.

The importance of lived experience in the creation of place is emphasised by Healey as "[t]he social meaning of a place thus cannot easily be read from its physical appearance" (Healey, 2010: 33). So in order to explore the meaning or identity of place we must consider the practices and activities within that place, and the interactions within it. As "[p]laces are never finished, but are produced through the reiteration of practices" (Cresswell, 2015: 116), an examination of these practices can help us to understand the ways in which visions of a city are formed, problematising some of the place-making activity that occurs within cities. One way in which Cresswell describes the development of place is through consideration of the role of memory in place-making, commenting that "[s]ome memories are allowed to fade – are not given any kind of support. Other

memories are promoted as standing for this and that" (2015: 119); with place-memory as "the ability of place to make the past come to life in the present and thus contribute to the production and reproduction of social memory" (ibid.). Through processes of place-making (and also place-marketing), individuals charged with these kinds of activity are able to use their (relative) positions of power to influence this process of social memory (re)production, thereby enabling the presentation of an identity that may be appealing in terms of attracting new residents, visitors and investment to the city.

4.3.2 Place-making or place-marketing

As identified in the previous chapter, it has been suggested that the 21st Century marks a shift from the 'planned' city to the 'branded' city (Evans, 2006). This opens up questions around how the kind of place-making rhetoric outlined above is different from the kinds of place-marketing initiatives put in place by city councils and associated arms-length agencies. In a study of place-marketing strategies in promotional literature, Murray found that "[i]nstead of a dynamic and challenging approach to local character, we are confronted with unrepresentative stereotypes and parodies of the past", where "[t]he messages follow an insipid formula, which makes it difficult to distinguish one place from another" (2001: 6). Murray then continues to state that "[t]he very approach that is making our towns, cities and regions successful – the application of creativity, the development of cultural vitality, the celebration of difference – is severely lacking in the practice and literature being used to promote places" (Murray, 2001: 8-9). These findings offer a useful distinction between place-making and place-marketing, with the former focusing upon creativity and individuality where the latter, in practice, follows a remarkably similar pattern from place to place.

Following the ideas of Healey (1997), Neill defines the difference between place-making and place-marketing by stating that "place-making involves the double-faceted quality of a consciousness of place among local stakeholders, going beyond outward competitive place-marketing in the global economy to an inward-looking concern with local identity and a feeling of belonging" (2004: 112). Neill argues that place-marketing can be defined through its external, competitive focus whereas practices that we may define as place-making pay greater attention to internal forces and the kind of evolution of place identity that occurs through the meaning-making processes outlined above. Adding to the views on place of Madanipour (1996) and Cresswell (2015), Healey suggests that place quality is not just about facilities (the kinds of factors that may be stressed within place-marketing strategies), but "[i]t also encompasses the meanings and values that

people invest in what is around them and their perceptions of their ability to influence their surroundings" (Healey, 2010: 33). Therefore, it is not only a focus on meaning and value that can distinguish place-making from place-marketing, but the feeling that inhabitants have a sense of ownership over a place.

Exploring this idea further, we should understand that, "[p]lace, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power" (Cresswell, 2015: 19). As culture and identity are intertwined through practices of place-making and (to a lesser extent) place-marketing, power relations are also a key element in the practices of contemporary place-making through culture. In order to explore the ways in which culture plays a role in developing and perpetuating understandings of the city (in part through everyday practices), consideration must be given to the power relations at play within the urban context.

4.4 Power and Capital as tools for understanding

The importance of power and capital is outlined here, focusing on these concepts as tools with which to examine culture within cities. In order to move beyond reductionist conceptions of power and capital, the work of Bourdieu is used to inform the research, though there are fluid understandings at play here, and the intention is not to apply rigid definitions. Rather, this research uses these concepts to reframe a discussion of culture-led regeneration, and to probe into areas often left under-studied within this area.

4.4.1 Introducing Power

Concepts such as power and capital are important themes in the study of the representations of the city, cultural events and the practices that create them. Central to understanding the ways in which culture is deployed is the issue of who has power to decide what forms of culture are used, supported or promoted within the city. As Johnson *et al* state, "[c]ulture is always a setting of and for power, just as power is a setting of and for culture" (2004: 135) and it is therefore imperative we be explicit when referring to and exploring the power relations involved here, as power and capital cannot be disentangled from one another if we are to develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which culture is utilised within cities.

Power and capital are entangled and inherent in social relations. As Massey has expressed, "[o]ne of the most powerful ways in which social space can be conceptualised is as constituted out of social relations, social interactions and for that

reason, always and everywhere an expression and a medium of power" (Massey, 1995: 284, quoted in Westwood, 1999: 112). Particularly relevant to this study of culture and representation is Bourdieu's idea of symbolic power whereby individuals are able to name or legitimise what counts as culture and what forms these representations take. Bourdieu explains that "the act of naming helps to establish the structure of this world, and does so all the more significantly the more widely it is recognized, i.e. authorized" (1991: 105), going on to suggest that those with such a power to name are holders of symbolic power.

> "Symbolic power – as a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization – is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognized*, that is, misrecognized as arbitrary" (Bourdieu, 1991: 170)

Symbolic power, then, is connected to perceived authority. If an individual or organisation is seen to have authority, this then allows them a level of power or control over what is constituted as legitimate – for example, the promotion of legitimate culture or legitimate representations of the city. So "[t]he power to individuate within a given spatio-temporal frame is associated with the power to name; and naming is a form of power over people and things" (Harvey, 1996: 264, quoted in Westwood, 1999: 108-9). As symbolic power is so pervasive within social space and culture it is central to the relations at play within the networks of individuals and organisations involved in the production and promotion of culture within Manchester's cultural and civic bodies. Questioning the uses of symbolic power allows for taken-for-granted assumptions about urban and cultural elites to be considered.

Symbolic power here is particularly relevant to the question of who has the power to define or name certain practices as culturally relevant, with these practices – such as the manifestation of certain types of events through MIF – then forming part of the way that Manchester is perceived through the promotion and visibility of these events. Yet power and capital are also intertwined. Primarily, it will be the case that those who are perceived as having a level of power are those who also possess capital, in any or all of its forms.

4.4.2 Cultural Capital

Capital can be understood here as "the holdings which confer power on agents relative to one another within specific fields and which those agents mobilise with a view to increasing their overall stock of such holdings" (Bennett and Silva, 2011: 429-430). It can be inferred that those with a greater level of social or cultural capital will thus possess a certain level of power and Westwood suggests that Bourdieu's "attempts to theorise economic and cultural capital are attempts to theorise power, and to suggest that the economic does not stand alone nor can it be reified in this way" (1999: 50). Capital therefore is not just economic but also cultural and "Bourdieu's work suggested that in the reproduction of capitalism both economic and cultural capital were important and, although the two were very often expressed simultaneously, it was cultural capital that allowed access to economic rewards" (Westwood, 1999: 49-50). We can see, therefore, that the production of culture through everyday practices is tied up with not only the economic, but the social and cultural capital of the groups of elites in question, with these practices in turn reproducing a social reality through their position of dominance.

Cultural capital is of particular importance here, as the term "is now widely deployed across the social sciences to refer broadly to the way that cultural processes are implicated in social stratifications" (Prieur and Savage, 2011: 566). Cultural capital and the symbolic power of city elites therefore affect who has the capacity to define what counts as culture. The everyday practices which create particular representations of culture are imbued with symbolic power and cultural capital. Cultural capital encompasses more than financial assets and "the impersonal circuits of capital and the mechanisms of its increase, in being exchanged for labour power, through its conversion from money into the commodity form and back again" (Bennett and Silva, 2011: 429). The relevance of cultural capital to cultural studies in particular is outlined by Bennett and Silva, who suggest that:

> "[cultural capital] continues to provide a key point of reference for current social and cultural research. It also now routinely informs debates and practices within the arts, cultural and educational policy sectors and has, indeed, spilled beyond both the academic and policy fields in becoming part of everyday public discourse where the term is often used to account for particular kinds of advantage or disadvantage" (Bennett and Silva, 2011: 428)

The concept of cultural capital is of use in articulating the ways in which advantage, power and privilege are connected to culture and the arts. The concern of this research with who is involved in the (re)production of dominant representations of the city through cultural events is directly tied to concerns of cultural capital. Those with the power to dictate what is mobilised in such representations are most likely to be those with a certain level of cultural capital and particular social relations and aesthetic forms are operationalised through their practices of making culture. These operations therefore form much of the focus of this study as they are the point at which dominant forms are reproduced, modified or challenged within the systems or networks of urban and cultural elites.

Following on from this discussion of the ways in which power and capital can be used to explore ideas around city identity and urban representations, consideration is now given to how one may conceive of such a 'city identity', comprising of a discussion of whether the concept of habitus may be an appropriate tool here, in conjunction with broadly Bourdieusian understandings of power and capital.

4.5 City Identity

The study of the practices of cultural events enables consideration of how these concepts such as power and capital link back to ideas around city identity. It is possible that an understanding of habitus can help to develop this, given Bourdieu's use of concepts of habitus, field, power and capital in conjunction with one another (Ahmad, 2013). In addition to the relevance of power and capital as outlined above, a consideration of habitus and field can be helpful in viewing and understanding the everyday practices of power. In discussing these below, it is argued that, whilst many of Bourdieu's theories are relevant to the study of contemporary uses of cultural events, a Bourdieusian framework incorporating habitus has been rejected here in favour of a less restrictive idea of city identity.

4.5.1 Introducing Habitus

Habitus can be understood as "a sense of one's (and others') place and role in the world of one's lived environment" (Hillier and Rooksby, 2002: 5), or a set of long-lasting dispositions that "tend to perpetuate, to reproduce themselves" (Bourdieu, 2002: 29), although Bourdieu adds that "they are not eternal. They may be changed by historical action oriented by intention and consciousness" (ibid.). Though the concept of habitus appears similar to the idea of 'character', Bourdieu stresses that unlike character, it "is

something *non natural*, a set of *acquired* characteristics which are the product of social conditions and which, for that reason, may be totally or partially common to people who have been the product of similar conditions" (Bourdieu, 2002: 29. Emphasis in original). The (re)production of habitus within individuals is unconscious, a kind of "alchemy" (Bourdieu, 2010: 168), whereby capital and power are transformed "into a system of perceived differences, distinctive properties, that is, a distribution of symbolic capital, legitimate capital, whose objective truth is misrecognized" (ibid.).

As what is being considered here are representations of the city through culture, it can be inferred that dominant representations equate to that which has been attributed value within a certain field, in this case the field incorporating a level of cultural and civic dominance within the city. Within this research, the field is considered to be that of culture-led regeneration within Manchester, defined by an interest amongst this group in culture's role within the city that both drives activity in this area and reproduces further interest (Bourdieu, 1990: 88). What is going on within the field is articulated through various practices, in this case those that have been studied during a period of embedded case study research. It seems clear that both field and practice can be used in conjunction with one another here to explore the micro-processes of the production of representations through culture which is important particularly given that some research into culture understands or appropriates habitus without due consideration of field. Ahmad (2013) suggests, for example, that tourism studies fails to incorporate field and practice when discussing habitus.

4.5.2 From Habitus to City Identity

The urban regeneration literature often seems to suggest or imply that cities can embody an urban identity, as exemplified in work exploring how culture and regeneration are used to reproduce certain meanings or city identities (see for example Bailey *et al*, 2004; Colomb, 2011; Jansson, 2005). Whilst the idea of a city identity cannot simply be equated with Bourdieu's original conception of habitus and one may critique the idea that it is indeed possible for a city to be perceived as having a habitus, this idea is one that resonates in particular with the (re)branding exercises of cities. Examining city identity is a way in which to view the representations of cities through culture, giving the opportunity to both explore and problematise such a notion in order to further understand how individuals and organisations within the city develop and perpetuate urban representations. This feeds into a sense of the 'culture' of a city (in anthropological terms) through understanding of the city's culture in 'Capital C' terms.

A number of studies of culture and urban regeneration are concerned with the formation or perpetuation of city identities, for example through urban branding or marketing (Ward, 1998, amongst others). Whilst these studies do not explicitly refer to these identities as a habitus of the city, there are parallels that can be drawn between an idea of an enduring urban identity, and an enduring habitus. In a controversial reading of Bourdieu's theory of habitus, Lee (1997) applies these ideas to his own suggestion that cities can, themselves, embody a habitus, with the habitus of location as "a set of relatively consistent, enduring and generative cultural (pre)dispositions to respond to certain circumstances, or 'the outside world' in particular ways" within a given field (Lee, 1997: 132). In explaining this idea further, Lee sets out that:

> "The culture of a location, I want to suggest, is the cumulative product of the collective and sedimented history of that location, and like any history cannot be readily or easily dissolved but manifests a certain durability, marking its presence on the contemporary social and physical landscape of the location in question" – in other words, cities have habitus (Lee, 1997: 127)

Lee points to the endurance of particular dispositions or characters within cities, referring to these as "the *practice* of the city or, one might almost say, the way a city behaves" (Lee, 1997: 133). Lee suggests that this practice is made up of a multitude of activities including budgeting, city planning, and numerous choices made by city councils and officials, claiming that they are all "conditioned by a sort of governing logic which is not merely reducible to the actions of say a particular local government but actually constitutes the outcome of the 'guiding hand' of habitus" (Lee, 1997: 134). This is evident in the way in which cultural elites often work according to the same pattern of urban identity. In Manchester this manifests itself in the idea that 'we do things differently here' – a quote generally attributed to the late Tony Wilson[9]. Lee argues that this theoretical basis can lead us to "imagine a genuinely productive way of conceiving of local history, namely as the *movement of the city habitus through time*" (Lee, 1997: 134. Emphasis in original), a habitus which is determined by a number of 'objective conditions' of the city, characterised by both internal and external facts, although it is problematic to suggest that cities have a singular history, as this neglects that multiple urban identities are constructed by multiple individuals and groups:

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[9] Tony Wilson was Salford-born and Stockport-raised, before gaining a degree from Cambridge and returning to Manchester to start a broadcasting career which led to his co-founding of Factory Records – a key part of Manchester's music scene in the 1970s and 1980s. On his death in 2007 he was still heavily involved in music in Manchester, being part of the team behind the annual In The City music festival which ran between 1992 and 2010.

- 'internal' facts: "the city's physical geography; its climate; the demographic composition of its population" etc.
- 'external' facts: "all those 'outside forces', whether deriving from regional, national, international or global origins, that a city has to negotiate" (e.g. national trends in labour or capital) (Lee, 1997: 135)

Evidently, there are a number of questions that arise from this theory of city habitus, primarily that Bourdieu's concept is directly related to a deeply socialised view of the construction of dispositions, and it is therefore problematic to transpose this concept directly onto a city. It is highly questionable whether an entire city can have an embodied, unconscious identity, and, additionally, a city cannot be characterised by one field. It is, however, an appealing notion, and seemingly one that is taken on board (consciously or otherwise) by individuals and organisations with a hand in the branding and marketing of cities.

Despite shortcomings then, this idea of city habitus remains a useful lens through which to examine the practices of (re)production of city identity, particularly given the manner in which those involved in such pursuits perceive the city as embodying traits or a personality. Taking criticisms into account, the research presented here considers these practices and behaviours of the city and, instead of equating these to habitus, focuses upon them as key factors in attempts to construct and make claims about a distinctive urban identity. Key to this is an understanding of place-making, as outlined above, as well as an overall 'sense of place', as "[h]aving roots in a place, belonging to a place, and grounding oneself in the everyday meaningful world of significance keeps at bay the unsettling groundlessness of experience" (Neill, 2004: 14). Neill argues that in understanding this 'sense of place', the use of place-making is more apt than the use of habitus that Hillier and Rooksby (2002) and others use, in part due to the lack of spatial focus within Bourdieu's work. The incorporation of ideas of a sense of place, as well as reflections on the overall framework, are discussed below.

4.6 Culture and a Sense of Place

Having outlined uses of culture within this study, the concepts of urban identity and place-making that are being used here, and the theoretical tools that have been of use in understanding these concepts within the context of Manchester, attention is now turned to reflections on the concepts and theories being used and the ways in which these contribute to a deeper idea of culture's role in fostering a sense of place.

4.6.1 Reflections

The discussion above has shown how ideas of power and capital allow this research to push beyond some of the boundaries evident in literature around culture and urban regeneration, particularly as Bourdieu's work on these subjects opposes the dichotomy of theory and practice common in academia, whereby theory informs practice in a unidirectional fashion rather than the relationship being dialectical (Hillier and Rooksby, 2002). In order to employ these tools within the research, the theory of a 'city habitus' highlights the potential to explore the practices involved in the development of city representations, although 'city identity' has been favoured in this research as opposed to 'city habitus'. Using these theories within a cultural studies frame rather than strictly adhering to them as the primary element of a framework facilitates their use as research tools that enable the field of culture-led regeneration to be viewed in a way that problematises some of the characteristics often found within such research (such as the tendency to examine outcomes over processes).

Ideas of the interrelation of power and different types of capital within particular fields are useful tools in considering the process and practice of representing the city through its cultural events, allowing for a more considered understanding of these practices that is critical of the kind of taken-for-granted assumptions that can surround exploration of questions such as those of cultural value. The use of these ideas here forms an acknowledgement that Bourdieu's concepts are "enormously good to think with. His work invites, even demands, argument and reflection" (Jenkins, 2002: 11), with ideas of power and capital in particular allowing an empirical focus on the processes and practices behind representation through culture which has rarely been evident in urban regeneration research. This thus connects the research undertaken here to a cultural studies tradition that is often focused upon exploration through ethnographic methods, using these approaches to further the theoretical contribution of urban regeneration literature and urban studies literature more generally.

4.6.2 Understanding identity and a sense of place

Underpinning the use of the concepts outlined above is a desire to examine and understand the ways that cultural events contribute to urban identity, place-making and a sense of place. Viewing culture-led regeneration through this cultural studies frame and using concepts such as power and capital to explore cultural events, a consideration of the role of city identity within contemporary urban narratives is foregrounded here. In exploring Manchester and MIF through this frame, the research here considers the

representation of city identity as perpetuated or reinforced by those with levels of power and cultural capital, and as articulated through a series of recurring cultural events. This is of relevance as, as Pizanias notes:

> "The search for and validation of identity have emerged as distinctive features of political as well as artistic discourses: identity matters, and culture is seen as central to identity formation and sustenance" (Pizanias, 2000: 145)

Although Pizanias is referring to the identity of individuals here, this articulates the interconnectivity between culture and identity that is central to this research. Additionally, "[t]here is no doubt that the places in which people live have a very deep impact upon their identities, but they are also placed by the locality in which they live" (Westwood, 1999: 109). So culture, place and identity are all bound up with one another, and the understandings of the concepts outlined above enable us to navigate these complexities and begin to understand how cultural events are instrumental in the development of place identity and understandings of the city, through deliberate branding exercises as well as less easily defined practices of place-making. Westwood also comments, however, that "one has to be careful in claiming too much for place identifications and constructing a romance in relation to geographies about which people are very strategic" (Westwood, 1999: 109). It is this romance that seems to inform Lee's (1997) idea of city habitus and this research aims to cast a more critical eye over these processes and the behaviours and motivations of the actors within this. It is key to remember here that places produce meaning:

> "If we choose to make place and space our primary objects of research, then, we must recognize that they are produced as a result of the meanings we attach to them. These meanings are imbued with power, especially those of the people who have the authority to imagine and direct the organization of space and those of the people who utilize and experience that space" (Johnson *et al*, 2004: 110)

It is these individuals with authority that have been primarily studied during the course of this research, and the intention is to consider the meanings that can be viewed in dominant representations of space through culture. We can also consider that "culture is about feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas" (Hall, 1997a: 2), and that such 'feelings' contribute to a sense of place. As Neill comments:

> "Cultural attachment to place goes beyond the city as a container or 'theatre' for social activity. It involves an emotionally charged spatial imagination extending from the personal to various collective manifestations, including spiritual and symbolic identifications" (Neill, 2004: 112)

Cultural activity such as MIF can therefore be seen as having the potential to contribute to place attachment, a sense of place or city identity through both personal and collective experiences. Healey says of a sense of place that "[w]e get such a sense when we feel that we have arrived somewhere, when we sense an ambience, when we feel we are at some kind of nodal space in the flows of our lives" (Healey, 2010: 33), stressing the importance of both the physical experience of this and the imaginative experience. It seems, therefore, that for a sense of place to be articulated through culture, a deeper engagement is required than the kind of place-marketing that was discussed in the previous chapter. With this in mind, it can be suggested that urban identity or a sense of place can be articulated through a combination of activities that encompass place-marketing, deeper connections with identity through place-making, or the idea of an 'ethos' which suggests an identity that is displayed through a range of activity in the city.

As explored above, efforts of (culture-led) urban regeneration can encompass place-marketing, closely linked to branding activities, or place-making, which is defined as a more inward-looking exercise that examines identity. We can consider these as elements of a wider outlook, with 'ethos' positioned alongside them. As shall be explored in greater depth in Chapter 6, the idea of ethos is a reference to the kind of marketing activity which makes claims to a deeper level of engagement with place-identity. Consequently, the empirical work that follows examines the organisational cultures within MIF and other structures within Manchester (such as Manchester City Council) in order to further understand whereabouts within this framework cultural activity such as MIF lies. Understandings of power and capital, as well as a focus on place identity as expressed through culture, are being used here as a frame through which to examine where MIF lies.

The key to the contribution here is an examination of the micro-processes which take in feelings, attachments and emotions around culture as well as using these ideas of place-marketing, place-making and ethos to explore and critique such processes, the resulting urban representations that spring from them and the ways in which these relate to contemporary discussions of cultural value. By understanding a city identity as something that is constructed (and reconstructed) primarily by a range of individuals

possessing the kinds of social and cultural capital that bestow a level of power, we are able to critique the kinds of urban branding and marketing that contribute to urban narratives and contemporary understandings of the city. Additionally, this enables us to develop a deeper understanding of whether the support of cultural activity is about the kind of branding and positioning of place-marketing, or whether there are deeper meanings here that resonate with a complex understanding of culture, ethos and place-making.

In order to explore this further, this research has employed ethnographic methods, with participant observation as well as interviews complementing background information on MIF and Manchester's landscape of culture-led regeneration offered through document analysis. In the following chapter, these are discussed in full, including an exploration of issues of ethics and reflexivity, particularly the case of research positionality and performativity as embedded research such as this is tied up in both the theory and practice of the creation of representations being studied. These considerations, along with the framework presented here and the background offered by the context and literature review in preceding chapters, frame the empirical work that follows.

5 Methodology

Following on from a discussion of the theoretical and analytical framing of this research, here the methodology used to conduct the research is presented. The research questions given in Chapter 1 are restated, before a discussion of the ethnographic approach that has been used here, and an outline of the locations that were identified as being of primary importance throughout the research. This methodological rationale frames the use of three specific methods: participant observation, semi-structured interviews (including elite interviews) and document analysis. Each of these methods are then discussed in turn within a cultural studies frame, giving reasoning for the use of these methods as well as detailed information regarding their execution and analysis, before outlining some of the philosophical and practical considerations that this research requires.

To recap, the research questions are as follows:

1) How are visions, understandings and representations of Manchester formed through MIF?
2) How are these understandings articulated through practices?
3) Is MIF an elite project about economics?
4) What are the cultural projects that come out of this and how does this position MIF within Manchester's contemporary urban narrative?

These questions are considered alongside the following exploration of methods in order to explain and justify their use within the research.

5.1 Rationale

5.1.1 Approach

Whilst not a strict ethnographic piece of work in the traditional, anthropological sense, the position afforded by long-term immersion in the field through employment opportunities within MIF, along with the use of participant observation as a primary research method, has resulted in the use of an ethnographic approach to this research, as the methods associated with ethnography lend themselves to the exploration of themes of power and capital (amongst others). This use of ethnography is one that has long been associated with cultural studies, as "the incorporation of, for example, an ethnographic tradition in cultural studies has always been a *partial* event, one that has always been mediated by various resonances of other research traditions" (Van Loon,

2007: 273 – emphasis in original), and perhaps due to this flexibility in its usage, ethnography has thus "emerged as a particularly effective and popular approach to research cultural processes" (ibid.).

Complementing this ethnographic framing, the research approach that has been used to investigate the research questions centres around a grounding in cultural studies, social constructionism and the concepts of Bourdieu – as expanded upon in the previous chapter – and has been conducted through a mixed methods approach incorporating participant observation, interviews and document analysis, with the time spent in the field (15 months total) lending itself towards an ethnographic approach weighted towards the first two of these methods. The elements commonly used in ethnography (specifically participant observation techniques) have been incorporated here in order to go beyond "understanding social events or processes from reports about these events (e.g., in an interview)...[towards] understanding social processes of making these events from the inside by participating in the processes' developments" (Flick, 2006: 23). In particular, the prolonged time in the field afforded by part time employment at MIF further developed the ethnographic element of this research beyond the scope initially conceived at the outset of the study, allowing the gathering of a richer set of data.

As has been covered in previous chapters, culture is a highly complex and contested term, and as such its definition by various parties cannot be taken for granted or assumed to be 'fact'. Thus this research does not intend to assume that these 'facts' can be simply collected on the social world, particularly as this "reflects and perpetuates unequal power relations which already exist within society" (May, 2001: 58). Instead, this research intends to make power relations and differences in social or cultural capital explicit by questioning the representations of the city that are offered through cultural events. The intention of this research is therefore not to give a factual account of the practices of creating and promoting culture, but one in which observed 'realities' are combined with personal accounts, using MIF as a case study in order to explore the power relations and representations at play within cultural events, and to further the understanding of how a festival such as MIF represents its locale. Allen has commented upon his own field of housing studies that it privileges its theoretical basis over that of 'lived experience' and 'local knowledge' (2009: 5); and this research aims to counteract such positions by giving weight to the lived experience of individuals and groups, interviewing a broad range of individuals and observing the day-to-day processes of the

Festival in a way that is lacking in much of the literature around culture and urban regeneration.

Qualitative case study approaches (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 61) often use multiple methods. In this case participant observation, interviews and document analysis have all been used in order to build up a picture of MIF and Manchester ("the staples of the diet" of qualitative research – Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 105). Each of these methods will be discussed in turn below, detailing why and how they have been used. Whilst surveys and questionnaires are often used within case study research, these have been omitted here, as due to their prescriptive nature surveys do not aid the kind of nuanced understanding of the more complex social interactions that take place in the production and promotion of culture that this study addresses. Whilst the use of a survey would enable the collection of a large amount of data, the assumptions (or presumptions) that are made in the construction of survey questions, and the relation to the (dis)proving of hypotheses and operationalised measurements (May, 2001), was deemed incompatible with the social constructionist stance of this research and its cultural studies grounding, which has sought more detailed understandings of the opinions and position of key actors within the field of culture and regeneration within Manchester.

In Chapter 2, background information on both Manchester and the Manchester International Festival was given in order to provide context to this research. Before discussing each of the methods listed above in further detail, however, a description of the locations in which the research was conducted is presented in order to give context to the use of these methods.

5.1.2 Case Study Location

Whilst Manchester as a whole has formed the location of the research (particularly the city centre), individual locations around Manchester (marked on the map in Figure 2) were identified in order to carry out participant observation (as well as interviews), with the majority of observations carried out at MIF Headquarters (the Festival's main offices located on Parsonage in Manchester city centre, where the majority of preparation for the Festival takes place, and also the location of Volunteer Headquarters during the Festival) and Albert Square (in front of Manchester Town Hall; this is where the 'hub' of the Festival is during the three weeks of events – for which it is renamed 'Festival Square', incorporating the MIF Pavilion and providing a social centre for visitors, performers, staff and volunteers). The different locations identified had

different implications for the research undertaken, particularly regarding issues of public and private space; for example, MIF Headquarters falls within the parameters of private space, and thus access to this area was contingent upon my role as office administrator as well as my role as a volunteer (or indeed as a researcher) necessitating my visiting the offices. The issues surrounding the sites that constitute public space relate more to concerns about informed consent of participants, whilst the issues of ordinarily public spaces[10] that have certain restrictions placed upon them for the duration of the Festival differ slightly again as the interaction of the public with the space differs from the way in which they would use it ordinarily.

Figure 2: Primary Site Locations (Source: Google Maps)

As with all areas of the research the identification of locations has, to an extent, been emergent rather than tightly prefigured (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 3) and thus altered according to various circumstances throughout the research process, such as the release of the MIF13 Festival programme in February 2013. For example, the events at which I volunteered dictated some of the locations where observations took place, and although efforts were made to volunteer in a variety of locations, it was not possible to volunteer at every site due to time restrictions and availability of volunteering positions (volunteering sites are marked in Figure 3).

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[10] This refers predominantly to Albert Square; an ordinarily public area which is used as the Festival's hub. For the duration of the Festival there are restrictions put in place in the square such as no food and drink to be consumed unless it has been purchased on site.
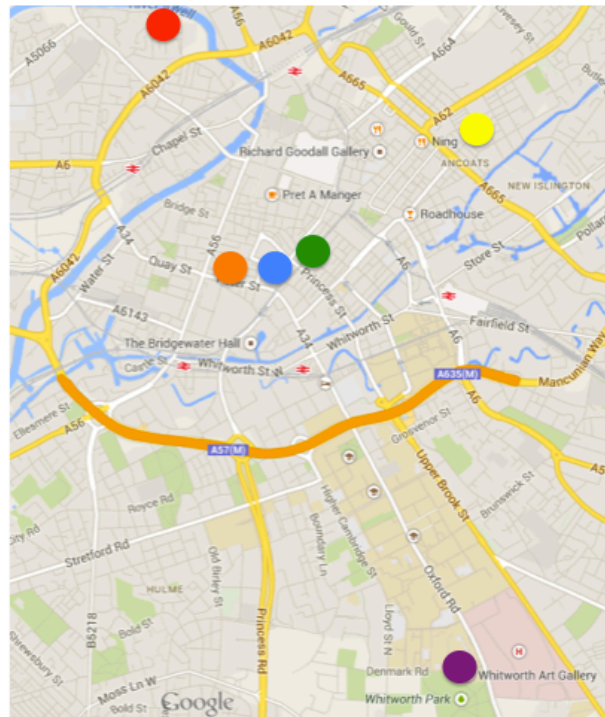
Figure 3: Volunteering Site Locations (Source: Google Maps)

5.2 Methods

Here, each of the three methods is discussed in turn, outlining the reasons for their use and the specific ways in which they have been used at particular stages of the research process. Due to the part-time role I occupied in the MIF office between June 2012 and August 2013, the three different methods have been incorporated at various points over this timescale, the timings of which are outlined in more detail below.

5.2.1 Participant Observation

The participant observation element of this research was greatly aided by the taking up of a role as a member of MIF staff. During my time as administrative assistant at MIF I was honest about my intentions as a researcher – the position began as an internship, and this ongoing research was one of the reasons for the job to be offered. In the initial months of the role, around half of the MIF staff were aware of this research, but continuing openness and honesty with all staff about this dual employee/researcher role was key, with all staff being aware of this research before the initial internship ended in December 2012. Due to this position, initially involving two days a week in the MIF office (the number of days then increasing between January and July 2013), and the

access this has afforded, much of this research has centred around participant observation, as "Immersion in the setting allows the researcher to hear, see, and begin to experience reality as the participants do" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 106).

In particular, observation has allowed the comparison of the cultural representation of the city as defined by MIF and other members of Manchester's cultural elite with that which is experienced 'on the ground' during the Festival itself, both by myself and other residents and visitors to the city (though care was taken to consider positionality as both insider and outsider in this respect – further discussion of positionality and insider/outsider roles follows in section 5.3). This method is not theory-led, as the theory should fit the data rather than being forced upon it (May, 2001). Thus Marshall and Rossman's suggestion that "In the early stages of qualitative inquiry, the researcher typically enters the setting with broad areas of interest but without predetermined categories or strict observational checklists" (1999: 107) was followed, with observation thus beginning at an earlier stage than the interview process.

Table 2 shows how this method relates to the core research questions, through observing interactions and behaviours of those within the office as well as other stakeholders across the city. In seeking to explore these questions, the role of 'participant as observer' was assumed, an overt rather than covert role where my colleagues at MIF were aware of this dual role as both employee and researcher (which subsequently became a triple role as the position of volunteer was added to this). May highlights that this role "often means becoming a 'fan' (Van Maanen, 1998) who desires to know and understand more from people within the setting" (2001: 156), and it was from this perspective that I introduced my area of research to colleagues. It has been important to remember that in this role "You will observe from a member's perspective but also influence what you observe owing to your participation" (Flick, 2006: 220), and thus a level of reflexivity – and flexibility – was sought in order to account for this and make these patterns of influence an explicit part of the research process.

Table 2: Participant Observation: Links to Research Questions

Research Question	Link to Method
How are visions and understandings of Manchester formed through MIF?	Observing networks of individuals both within and outside MIF, including 'alternative' networks such as MIF Creative and Volunteering which may not conform to the types of 'usual suspect' in the city's cultural networks
How are these understandings articulated through practices?	Observing how connected MIF is to a Manchester image, particularly through staff and volunteering meetings, as well as examining the image presented by the office itself and examining staff and volunteers as 'embodiments' of a MIF 'ethos'
Is MIF an elite project about economics?	Gauging opinion through public reaction to, for example, ticket pricing, and MIF staff's counter-reaction to this; soliciting opinions from the public during the course of volunteering duties; examining the interplay of staff with visitors
What are the cultural projects that come out of this and how does this position MIF within Manchester's contemporary urban narrative?	Identifying any confusion around what/who MIF is for from the public; identifying perceived successes and failures within MIF programming and what kind of city these portray; gaining an 'insider's' point of view

In order for effective participation to occur within the social milieu of MIF there was a need to gain acceptance, as "This period of 'moving into' a setting is both analytically and personally important" (May, 2001: 157). My position in the office for the duration of the data collection period enabled this level of acceptance as I developed working relationships with my colleagues. Additionally, Hammersley and Atkinson have highlighted that "Whether or not people have knowledge of social research, they are often more concerned with what kind of *person* the researcher is than with the research itself" (1983: 78. Emphasis in original).

It was to this end that ongoing involvement with MIF provided a distinct advantage, where the employees and other connected individuals had the time to become used to my presence and trust me as a colleague and individual even if they did not all fully understand my role as a researcher, a level of trust evident through openness of conversation, eagerness on the part of some colleagues to assist with the research, and questions surrounding the research as well as social interaction outside the office setting. This prolonged period in the field also recognised the understanding of the Chicago school that "social life is not fixed, but dynamic and changing" (May, 2001: 148), as well as allowing for the exclusion, "over time, [of] the preconceptions that researchers may have" (May, 2001: 150), particularly in this case any preconceptions around different stakeholders' priorities where the role or value of cultural events was concerned.

Table 3: Details of observations made

What?	Why?	Access?
Day to day office running	To gain first hand understanding of how MIF is run and what the office's relationship is with the public/other Manchester institutions etc	Through working at the office between two and five days a week
Team meetings	To understand more about the commissioning and planning process and intended representations	Team meetings are usually on Tuesdays, so working days were specifically scheduled to maximise attendance
City-wide observations during Festival	To observe first-hand the life of the city during the festival and note any changes	Public access
Specific events during festival	To understand the impact of individual events where possible	Access through position as administrator, volunteer and ticket-holder

During the time spent in the field, a number of different activities were observed and recorded, as outlined in Table 3. This role in the MIF office offered scope to observe the first two activities in Table 3, including decision-making processes. The latter two sets of observations entailed a period of around two months, characterised by increasing involvement in the events in and around the 2013 Festival, during which I took up an additional position as a MIF Volunteer, in the role of 'Festival Fronteer' (a role I had

previously undertaken during the 2011 Festival) which involved manning a variety of sites across the festival (as outlined in Figure 3 above) and interacting with the public (both event ticket holders and the general public). This opened up the possibility of experiencing events and situations related to MIF which were unplanned for, and are therefore not directly regulated by those with power over the direction of people's festival experience, thus developing an understanding of the practice of the Festival as well as the planning.

The observations made were recorded as field notes in a field diary, encompassing both direct observations, and personal comments on these observations as "In 'doing' ethnography, engagement is used to an advantage...In this process, ethnographers have explicitly drawn upon their own biographies in the research process" (May, 2001: 154). An ethnographic approach has allowed for an understanding that my own interpretation of events has formed a part of their construction. The field notes taken were sensitive to the following factors:

> "how you were able to access the community which you ended up studying; how your understandings have been affected by your developing role in the community; what power relations can be discerned in this; how your expectations and motives are played out as the research progresses; what you divulge, why and to whom, and how they appear to react to this, how various aspects of the research encounter make you 'feel' and how this affects what you do; ...who introduced you to whom...what your immediate impressions were and how they changed; and so on."
> (Cook, 2005: 180)

Even the lengthy list offered by Cook did not account for every type of experience or interaction that was recorded as a part of the field notes, and as such the field notes were intended to alter and progress as the research itself progressed. A time scale for the participant observation element of this research is given in Figure 4.

- June 2012 – August 2013: Diary of observations kept and monthly summaries written.
- June 2012 – December 2012: 2 days per week working in the MIF office. Diary of this and any additional meetings kept.
- January 2013: Overall summaries/analysis of this period completed.
- January – June 2013: More detailed diary kept, particularly following festival programme announcement in April.
- July 2013: MIF13 runs, diary kept every day given extra office work and volunteer involvement.
- August – September 2013: Overall summary compiled, full draft of analysis completed and combined with other findings.

Figure 4: Participant Observation Time Scale

The most intensive period of observation took place during the three weeks of MIF13 during July 2013 (as well as the weeks leading up to this), but recording of observations began in June 2012 and continued until August 2013. As questions generated via the process of observation help to "focus the next series of observations on answering these questions and thereby utilizing the flexibility of this method" (May, 2001: 159), monthly summaries of findings were written, enabling the identification of key themes and an opportunity to refine the recording of observations accordingly. In addition to recording observations of activities and conversations, these diaries also made reference to any issues of power relations or positionality according to age, gender or any other characteristic as this may have affected access (May, 2001; Silverman, 2006).

Despite the assumption that being an 'insider' conducting participant observation "offers a distinct advantage in terms of accessing and understanding the culture" (Labaree, 2002: 97), there are a number of issues that must be taken into account here. Labaree highlights the issue raised by Deutsch (1981) that the dichotomy of insider-outsider is a false one "that ignores the fact that researchers are multiple insiders and outsiders" (2002: 101), and consideration has been given over the course of this research to my own position in different circumstances. There were, for example, a number of meetings and decision-making processes to which I was certainly more outsider than insider (reflecting the secretive nature of much of the planning of MIF events up until the point of public announcement).

Labaree refers to Allum's (1991) four areas that insider participant obsevationalists will have to come to terms with: "The struggle to properly locate the author within the text"; "maintenance of objectivity and accuracy" (where even if the former is given little credence in this research, the latter is still of importance); "the desire of the participant observer to reject the sense of familiarity that comes with the intimacy of insiderness"; and "the issue of constructing and deconstructing presumptions of truthfulness in the text" (Labaree, 2002: 107-108). "Going observationalist" as opposed to "going native" "speaks to the need to distance oneself introspectively from the phenomena so that a more complete understanding of the community's social reality can be obtained" (Labaree, 2002: 116), and thus it was important to reflect upon these issues both during and after my time in the field, particularly through the analysis of the observations made.

The nature of field notes taken as a part of participant observation resulted in a certain amount of analysis having occurred in the field, due to the ongoing nature of analysis, and the 'reflexive rationalization' of conduct whereby "the continual interpretation and application of new knowledge by people [including the researcher] in their social environments [is] an ongoing process" (May, 2001: 154). However, more detailed analysis did not take place until the field had been left due to time constraints. The personal and emotional involvement in observations led to extensive field notes which were not all of particular relevance to research questions, despite the process of refinement through monthly summaries detailed above, making analysis of these notes a lengthy process of identifying the information that was most relevant to the study.

It is for this reason that there was a continual need to keep focused on the topic, and ask "[w]hat is this (really) a study of?" (Wolcott, 1990: 46), as well as a need to "do less, more thoroughly" as time progressed (Wolcott, 1990: 62). Labaree refers to this as a "continual process of introspective inquiry" (2002: 117), which enabled a certain level of analysis to be completed in the field. "The field researcher is always torn between the need to narrow down analysis through category construction and the need to allow some possibility of reinterpretation of the same data", so the "ability to shift focus as interesting new data become available" is of importance here (Silverman, 2006: 93), particularly given the varied roles occupied during the course of the research.

The writing up of field notes was completed in the first person where possible, due to the acknowledgement of the researcher as "centre stage in this method of data production, and reflexivity and biography are a legitimate part of this practice" (May, 2001: 169). It should be noted that the removal of personal values is inevitably impossible where field notes are being taken and analysed, particularly due to my own 'insiderness' at MIF (Labaree, 2002). It is this personal investment which leads to the perception of participant observation as "personally demanding" (May, 2001: 153); in this case, personal investment was a necessary part of the data collection, as both the administrator and Volunteer roles I occupied were partially public-facing, and, in a sense, I acted as an ambassador for MIF. Reconciling this "dualistic position as both the object of the study and the subject of that study" (Labaree, 2002: 106) was challenging, particularly as a long-standing enthusiasm for the work of MIF combined with a professional obligation to support the work of the Festival made critique difficult whilst in the field. However, it is my belief that this was ultimately rewarding due to the

opportunities to closely study the micro-processes of the Festival and thus contribute to an area often overlooked by studies focused on culture and urban regeneration.

5.2.2 Interviews

The use of interviews (including elite interviews) enabled the gathering of a greater level of data than participant observation alone, thus enabling some understanding of the meanings interviewees ascribe to MIF and its representations of Manchester. In this case, the term 'elite' interviews has been used due to the high-ranking nature of some of the MIF and MCC employees interviewed, those with "more knowledge, money and status" than the majority of the population (Odendahl and Shaw, 2002: 299). As interviews took place with a range of individuals from whom a variety of information was sought, a semi-structured or open-ended interview technique was pursued, where "The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's views but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 109).

The purpose of this has been to gain "rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (May, 2001: 120) which have helped to develop an idea of who constructs culture within MIF, and where individuals perceive the power to be in this process. This process has helped to answer the research questions in a variety of ways (as highlighted in Table 4), particularly through gauging individuals' perceptions around the primary objectives of the Festival, and the ways in which this may connect to a perceived urban identity.

Table 4: Interviews: Links to Research Questions

Research Question	Link to Method
How are visions and understandings of Manchester formed through MIF?	Questioning interviewees on MIF's (and Manchester's) historical and cultural trajectory, as well as perceptions on the networks involved in this
How are these understandings articulated through practices?	Expansion of the above, dependent on interviewee responses
Is MIF a hegemonic, elite project about economics?	Questions around perceived primary objectives of MIF, including probing any areas not mentioned by interviewees
What are the cultural projects that come out of this and how does this position MIF within Manchester's contemporary urban narrative?	Gleaning interviewees' perceptions of what constitutes a Mancunian identity, and how the work of MIF connects with this

The sample of interviewees (listed in Table 5) comprised primarily of easily identifiable actors within the process of creating and promoting culture through MIF, from MIF employees to Council workers to those otherwise involved in MIF. Interviewees within the Festival were chosen to represent a range of roles within MIF, as well as a variety of levels of responsibility, thus offering a breadth of opinion and experience. Outside MIF, the majority of interviewees could be considered 'elite', and were chosen due to their experience of – and influence over – Manchester's cultural programming. Where interviewees were not already known to me, gatekeepers were approached – a gatekeeper being "someone who has the authority to grant or deny permission to access potential participants and/or the ability to facilitate such access" (King and Horrocks, 2010: 31).

Table 5: Interviewee List

Interviewee	Name/Code	Position	Access
1 (scoping)	MIF 1	MIF Creative	Colleague
2 (scoping)	MIF 2	Marketing	Colleague
3 (scoping)	MIF 3	Producing	Colleague
4 (scoping)	MIF 4	Development	Colleague
5	Civic/Cultural 1	MIF Board	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
6	MCC 1	MCC Cultural Strategy	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
7	Civic/Cultural 2	MIF Artist	Personal Acquaintance
8	MCC 2	MCC upper echelons	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
9	MCC 3	MCC upper echelons	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
10	MIF 5	MIF Director	Colleague
11	MIF 6	Volunteering	Colleague
12	MIF 7	Producing	Colleague
13	Civic/Cultural 3	Marketing Manchester	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
14	Civic/Cultural 4	Marketing Manchester	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
15	Civic/Cultural 5	Cornerhouse	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper
16	Civic/Cultural 6	MIF Artist	Personal Acquaintance
17	MIF 8	MIF Creative	Colleague
18	Civic/Cultural 7	Community Worker	Personal Acquaintance
19	Civic/Cultural 8	Volunteer	Personal Acquaintance
20	Civic/Cultural 9	MIF Advisor	MIF Colleague as Gatekeeper

Primarily, gatekeepers were colleagues at MIF who have established relationships with those individuals relevant to the study that I had not been acquainted with in the past. Snowball sampling was used to an extent, with interviewees within MIF suggesting and providing contact details for individuals within Manchester City Council and Marketing Manchester, as well as for some artists involved in the Festival. "If the aim of a study is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive, then snowball sampling offers practical advantages" (Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 2), and this assisted in gaining access to individuals not initially within my base of contacts, particularly members of Manchester City Council and other civic bodies. Given the time constraints of the research (in particular due to my commitments as an employee of MIF), the extent of the networks that could be reached through snowball sampling was not exhausted.

There was a danger that reliance upon snowball sampling, along with the tendency towards interviewees being members of an elite, could lead to the exclusion of certain groups or 'voices' if they are not known to the initial interview sample, and this introduced an element of bias as "participants may, for example, tend to recommend people who share their view of the phenomenon under investigation" (King and Horrocks, 2010: 34). It may be suggested, however, that the benefits of this technique outweighed the problems here, particularly as – for example – access was granted to a number of elite individuals who may not have accepted without the use of gatekeepers and snowball sampling. Whilst there was no specific aim to reach communities often targeted by snowball sampling, such as those involved in illegal activity (Atkinson and Flint, 2001), it still proved fruitful in moving beyond the interviewing of those individuals easily accessible through personal acquaintance, eliciting a different understanding of how MIF represents Manchester and moving away from a level of bias that would have perhaps been inevitable if only MIF staff were to be interviewed.

It was initially hoped that there would also be the opportunity to interview local residents more generally in order to counteract any potential bias in the existing interview sample, though identifying individuals was more difficult in that respect, even with the use of snowball sampling. As a result of these difficulties in recruitment, attention was focused on those with some form of engagement with MIF. Due to this gap in the interview sample, this research cannot make claims as to the opinions of the wider population of Manchester regarding MIF's role in the city's image. Whilst there may be an issue here in the form of certain voices being absent from the resultant narrative, care was taken to try to balance positive views of MIF with the input of

individuals who may have a more critical viewpoint, in order to explore a wider range of perceptions, from those involved in local community work to those working at other arts organisations. It should be added, however, that due to the majority of interviewees being in positions of relative authority within arts or civic bodies, claims relating to community views on how Manchester is represented through cultural events cannot be made here.

Prior to each interview, interviewees were provided with an information sheet and consent form. Whilst it is important to remember that this information does not guarantee that the participants fully understand the basis of the project and their involvement (King and Horrocks, 2010), this helped to show participants that the following ethical considerations were being adhered to: informed consent, no deception, right to withdraw, debriefing and confidentiality (ibid.). In terms of the structure of the interviews themselves, rather than structuring questions that "'teach' the respondent to reply in accordance with the interview schedule", the open-ended or semi-structured technique was used, encouraging respondents "to answer in their own terms" (May, 2001: 121), a method often combined with that of participant observation (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002).

The intention here was that the interviewee would therefore be able "to answer questions within their own frame of reference" (May, 2001: 124), leading to a free flow of conversation potentially inhibited by structured interviews and therefore the potential to explore areas related to, yet not fully covered by, the initial research questions, providing "qualitative depth" to the data gathered (ibid.). For the purposes of this unstructured form of interviewing, an interview guide was devised (see Appendix 2), which, rather than specifying particular questions, identified topics to be covered over the course of the interview. This guide was amended over time; initially following a number of scoping interviews conducted in December 2012, but also between interviews as new insights became apparent (King and Horrocks, 2010). Whilst specific questions were not intended to be pre-prepared, problematic areas such as leading or over-complex questions were avoided. These and other pitfalls were looked for during the course of scoping interviews and rectified during the research process.

- September 2012: Lists of potential interviewees drawn up and, where necessary, contact persons found.
- November 2012: Initial interview guide drafted.
- December 2012: Scoping interviews conducted with four MIF employees
- January 2013: Scoping interviews analysed in order to uncover emerging themes.
- January 2013: Interview guide amended according to findings from scoping interviews.
- February – August 2013: Remaining interviews conducted as and when access is possible.
- August – September 2013: Preliminary analysis of all interviews conducted

Figure 5: Interview Timescale

Interviews were conducted at various stages between December 2012 and August 2013 (a timescale can be seen in Figure 5). An initial interview guide was developed during November 2012, incorporating areas of interest that had been developed through the initial stages of document analysis and observation. In December 2012, four scoping interviews were conducted in order to 'test' the interview guide and further develop questioning so as to avoid the pitfalls mentioned above and ensure a logical flow to conversation which should help put interviewees at ease (King and Horrocks, 2010). Transcription took place as soon as possible after each interview, and analysis of scoping interviews took place in January 2013, with subsequent changes to the interview guide taking place in January and February 2013. Further interviews were then conducted between February and August 2013. Where individuals highlighted as important for the study were available towards the start of this period, efforts were made to conduct the interviews at an early stage in order to allow time for transcription and, to an extent, analysis prior to the greater level of involvement that was required as the 2013 Festival approached. It must be noted, however, that many individuals who work for MIF do so on a temporary basis, and as such were not available – or indeed known to the Festival or myself – until closer to the Festival itself.

All interviews were recorded onto either digital Dictaphone or iPhone in order to maximise the authenticity of the data and prevent the danger of selective recall of the researcher (May, 2001), although notes were also taken in order to use written reminders for follow-up questions, and make a written record of any particular non-verbal communication such as hand gestures or body language (King and Horrocks, 2010) – as well as to provide back-up in the case of equipment failure. Recordings were then transcribed fully at a later stage, including notes of such features as pauses, overlapping

speech and tone of voice (King and Horocks, 2010). Personal past experience of research in this setting suggested that interviewees tend to be comfortable with the idea of their conversation being recorded; and all 20 interviewees consented to the interview being recorded in this manner, though it must be acknowledged here that despite full consent for the recording of interviews, there is a chance that this process may have affected interviewees' responses as recording might create "a particular context for what is said" and "the meanings of audio- or video-taping may be different to different respondents" (Warren, 2002: 91). Interview recordings were transferred to personal computer and password-protected immediately after the interview to maximise security and anonymity, and transcriptions were attributed to code names and numbers, with a key to these code names in a different, password-protected document.

As with all research, there were a number of issues that may have arisen here and could, to an extent, be planned for. For example there was the potential for interviewees to be "unwilling or…uncomfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 110). Beginning each interview with an assurance of anonymity of the interviewee helped to allay this kind of concern as did the building of rapport with some interviewees that was facilitated by my ongoing role at MIF, but where it did not, certain lines of questioning were abandoned – in particular it was found that lines of questioning referring explicitly to urban regeneration met with dismissive responses from MIF employees as many did not see the Festival as connected with such processes. In these cases, the question was reframed, for example by asking about particular elements or desired outcomes of regeneration such as economic or social impacts. When discussed in these terms, interviewees generally had more to say on the subject, perhaps due to 'urban regeneration' not being as widely understood a term as I expected.

Additionally, there may have been problems associated with the interviewing of high status or 'elite' participants, particularly that they may have been more defensive or used to asking questions rather than answering them (Odendahl and Shaw, 2002). As Mikecz highlights, "elites are used to being in charge and being asked about their opinion; they have the ability to converse easily, "just talk" and get into monologues instead of answering the hard questions. In addition, many of the elite research participants are trained in how to represent their organization to the outside world" (2011: 484), and this was certainly the case with a number of the interviewees within this sample. In this case, King and Horrocks' advice to "avoid challenging their authority in their own field but

remain sure of your own experience in yours" (2010: 57) was followed, which allowed interviewees to feel more at ease with the process and enabled discussion to flow freely without losing sight of the original topics within the interview guide.

Due to my position as an employee of MIF there was also the issue of role conflict, where there was a need to "draw a clear boundary between your researcher and professional roles from the start" (King and Horrocks, 2010: 58). Garton and Copland (2010) refer to interviews in this kind of ethnographic situation as 'acquaintance interviews', and suggest that the negotiation of roles in this situation can be complex. This is an issue which affects all of the methods being used here, and will be discussed in greater detail below. Finally, although no particular danger was anticipated in carrying out these interviews, a safety protocol was still followed whereby another individual was always aware of the timing and location of these interviews, and informed when they were completed.

Analysis of Interviews

In the analysis of interviews, it is important to "see respondents' answers as *cultural stories*" (Silverman, 2006: 134. Emphasis in original) rather than simply looking for patterns and correlations. It has thus been important to try and balance "within-case" and "cross-case" analysis in order to tell these stories whilst also drawing out themes across the interviews (King and Horrocks, 2010: 150). In order to allow for cross-case analysis, and to avoid disjointed analysis, interview transcripts were coded according to themes, taking the meaning of 'themes' from King and Horrocks, who propose that "Themes are recurrent and distinctive features of participants' accounts, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question" (2010: 150).

As indicated above, interviews were transcribed as soon after the interview took place as possible, as this enabled faster transcription due to a more accurate memory of the conversation. Thematic coding then took place according to the process outlined above, and whilst specifying themes prior to the interviews taking place may have constituted an *a priori* reading of the situation, there were a number of potential categories for coding and analysis identified before commencement of the interviews, such as views on cultural elites, high versus low culture, and social or cultural exclusion. Coding followed three main stages (taken from King and Horrocks, 2010); descriptive coding (involving reading through the transcripts and highlighting important or interesting

information), interpretive coding (in which the 'codes' identified in the first stage are clustered and interpreted across cases), and the identification of overarching themes, which can be combined with broader theoretical understandings.

The analysis of these transcripts was not intended to merely focus on the words themselves, for as Bourdieu has argued, "the analysis of talk requires more than linguistic analysis, as if speech were constructed in a hermetically sealed universe. What is also required is an explanation of the position of the speaker in terms, for example, of their class, race, gender, occupational position and so on" (Bourdieu, quoted in May, 2001: 140). It is for this reason that the use of NVivo (or similar packages) was deemed unnecessary, as although it may have saved time in the coding process, there is a chance that a focus upon word repetition may lead to other important understandings being overlooked. As May has highlighted, "while of considerable use, the process of analysis [by using packages such as NVivo] should not come to override the need to be familiar with the data produced" (2001: 140).

Above all, however, in analysing these interviews, care has been taken not to represent the participant's take on an event as an accurate representation of the event itself. This research is concerned with building a picture of culture based on people's interaction and identification with it – or lack thereof – and not merely the cultural event itself, and therefore the "understanding of how individuals make sense of their social world" (May, 2001: 142) that is gained from interviews is an important one.

5.2.3 Document Analysis

In addition to conducting participant observation and interviews, document analysis was undertaken as a further strand of this research. The primary role of document analysis in this case was to develop the contextual background of the study; using both official MIF documentation (including some privately circulated documents, as well as those publically available through the MIF website) – such as evaluation reports and advertising – and newspaper reports (public documentation) in order to give a picture of the case being studied, within which the interview guide, as well as data from interviews and observation has been positioned. Table 6 details the way in which document analysis links particularly to the four broad research questions, related to how MIF forms articulations of Manchester and how this is linked to a contemporary urban narrative of the city.

Table 6: Document Analysis: Links to Research Questions

Research Question	Link to Method
How are visions and understandings of Manchester formed through MIF?	Looking at the history and trajectory of MIF through official documentation from both the Festival and MCC
How are these understandings articulated through practices?	Examples from specific events through programme details, looking particularly at the more Manchester-centric events
Is MIF a hegemonic, elite project about economics?	Studying the balance of impacts (economic, social and environmental) through evaluation documents
What are the cultural projects that come out of this and how does this position MIF within Manchester's contemporary urban narrative?	Looking for evidence of any increase in focus on the city over time, gleaning evidence from press reaction to events

A list summarising the documents utilised is given in Table 7, outlining the type of document that has been sourced, its usefulness and the access issues associated with it. These documents "can tell us a great deal about the way in which events are constructed, the reasons employed, as well as providing materials upon which to base further research investigations" (May, 2001: 175), and therefore they have not been treated merely as expressions of historical fact, but as data representing certain socio-political viewpoints. Newspaper reports, in particular, were able to show a range of readings of MIF as an event, helping to build a picture of who the Festival caters for, who is involved in these decision making processes, and what the outcomes of this are. The documents utilised here were chosen not only to give context and background information to the research, but also in order to understand how MIF positions itself through public-facing promotional materials and how this compares to the image of MIF that is expressed through both independent evaluations and press coverage, both of which are more likely to show a level of critique of the events. The press coverage obtained and analysed has not been an exhaustive list, and has instead been made up of the coverage available through MIF itself due to limited time and resources with which to source all press coverage related to the Festival. It is for reasons such as this that the use of documents has been primarily to support or contest the evidence obtained through interviews and observations.

Table 7: Sample Document List

Document Type	Use	Access
MIF Evaluations	To gain an 'official' view of how MIF is received	All Evaluations are public documents
MIF Advertising/Promotional Materials	To understand how MIF represents itself and the city to the public	Advertising sourced through MIF office and personal collection
MIF Press Clippings	To understand press reaction to MIF events and compare this with intended representations	Online searches through newspaper websites, some press clippings sourced through MIF office
Internal MIF Office Memos	Background information	Available to me as a staff member, though not able to quote such documents here
MCC Documents	To understand how MIF fits in with MCC's broader culture and regeneration strategies	Some available online through MCC website, others offered by interviewees working with MCC

The importance of these documents is due to their role in creating meaning, as:

> "the processes by which meanings are made, shared, negotiated or imposed are intrinsic to processes of social reproduction, contestation and change and are therefore actively involved in shaping economy and society" (Hastings, 1999: 7)

Although these documents have a role in shaping MIF and people's perception of it, it is necessary to keep in mind, as suggested above, that the documents cannot be viewed as social or historical fact. By viewing documents as an independent report of social reality, we "utilize our own cultural understandings in order to 'engage' with 'meanings' which are embedded in the document itself", and make no apologies for our own positionality within the social world (May, 2001: 182-183), and indeed personal positionality has been considered throughout this research process (as shall be further discussed below).

Document analysis here can be seen as a type of discourse analysis, that which is concerned with the reading of texts rather than the analysis of speech or utterances (Hastings, 1999; Mills, 1997). It has been particularly important to avoid the problems

associated with discourse analysis (and its role in the cultural turn) such as the tendency to understand "the city as a space of performance, theatre and spectacle rather than as a site of inequality and struggle", whereby issues surrounding inequalities such as class or power are sidelined (Hastings, 1999: 8). The framework and theoretical grounding outlined in Chapter 4 have helped to ensure that facets such as power relations have formed a basis of the understanding of the documents used within the research, as has also been the case with both participant observation and interviews.

- July – August 2012: Collection of past MIF documents
- September 2012 – January 2013: Document analysis, incorporated with initial observations and scoping interviews
- February – July 2013: Collection of MIF13 documents
- August – September 2013: Analysis of extra documents and compilation of all evidence

Figure 6: Document Analysis Time Scale

The analysis of a number of the documents presented in Table 7 formed the early stage of the data gathering and analysis process (as outlined in Figure 6), not only due to the fact many of these documents were available prior to the start of data collection, but also so that the analysis of these documents was able to help inform the interviews conducted at a later stage. Additionally, the status of document analysis as "unobtrusive and non-reactive…[able to] be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 117), meant that it could be conducted at an early stage within the field, when relationships of trust were still being formed. To this end, a preliminary set of documents, comprising advertising, evaluation and press reviews of MIF07, MIF09 and MIF11[11] were gathered between July and August 2012, with initial analysis of these documents taking place between September 2012 and January 2013.

The purpose of this was to prepare for more detailed analysis of these documents (alongside scoping interview and observation data) which took place in January 2013, during which time this analysis informed the development of a second 'phase' of data collection which took place from February to August 2013. Documents related to the next Festival in 2013 became available once the programme of events was announced in February 2013. Between this point and the period following the Festival during which a large amount of press was generated, a secondary period of document collection ensued, with analysis of this further documentation taking place beyond August 2013 (after both

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[11] Individual festival years will be referred to throughout in this way; MIF07 being the 2007 festival and so on.

interviews and observation had been completed), at which stage it could be compiled with the earlier stage of analysis.

Analysis of Documents

The documents gathered were coded according to a number of themes. It has been important to remember that "Documents may...be interesting for what they leave out, as well as what they contain" (May, 2001: 183), and thus gaps in official and unofficial documentation have been considered as well as the content of these documents themselves. Although a semiotic approach is popular in document analysis, it has been deemed that in this case, the failing of this approach in its apparent suggestion "that a text does not refer to anything beyond itself nor to the intentions of its author" (May, 2001: 184) makes it incompatible with the other methods used here which are explicitly concerned with personal values and intentions, and indeed with the sensitivity associated with an ethnographic approach.

May suggests that in studying documents, we "utilize our own cultural understandings in order to 'engage' with 'meanings' which are embedded in the document itself. Researchers do not then apologize for being a part of the social world which they study, but, on the contrary, utilize that very fact" (May, 2001: 183) – much as in the case of not apologising for positionality that has been mentioned previously. It is in this way that an underlying understanding of social constructionism lends itself to the analysis of documents, viewing them as a part of a complex socio-political context rather than standalone expressions of fact or truth. Taking this into account, the analysis of the documents listed above has followed Scott's (1990) three levels of document interpretation (following Giddens): searching for meanings intended by the author, received meanings as constructed by audiences, and internal meanings sought by semioticians – though it is the first two of these that are of primary importance in this study.

In addition to this, Scott's (ibid) four criteria for assessing the quality of documental evidence have been taken into account: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Although documents have not been dismissed for a lack of any of these, it has been important to assess the credibility of sources when attempting to unpack the intentions and meanings of a document. Further to this basis of analysing documents by looking for different meanings, and understanding the authorial background and intent, it is important to state once again that this has been a qualitative analysis, not

quantitative analysis whereby patterns of repetition are sought, as "this method considers product and says little of process" (May 2001: 192). A quantitative analysis would have left little room for understanding of the importance of context, and ignored the possibility of multiple readings or understandings of one text (although this form of analysis may have helped to establish some of the key themes through repetition of phrases).

Particular issues arise with the analysis of documents sourced from the internet, where the credibility of sources has been a specific consideration, not just in terms of the authors of the articles themselves, but also in the question of whether to consider comments on newspaper articles, or even comments on other online forums such as Facebook and Twitter (where the 'hashtag' of #MIF13 was greatly used during the last Festival for people to share their thoughts and experiences). As a result of these issues, and a lack of 'best practice' examples to set a methodological precedent in this regard, much of the material gathered from online sources has not been used here. It should, however, be noted that MIF are at present building their use of social media tools and thus online presence is of increasing importance to them as an organisation. Therefore, there have been various opportunities to view and analyse the Festival's own online documentation as well as the comments of other sources or individuals, despite this not forming a major facet of the research presented here.

5.3 Philosophical and Practical Considerations

The following section offers an in-depth look at the kinds of philosophical and practical considerations that have been touched upon in relation to specific methods. Here, questions of access, ethics, positionality and reflexivity are all considered, giving reasoning as to the claims that can – or cannot – be made for this research as a result.

5.3.1 Access

As commented upon earlier within this chapter, a great deal of the physical access to certain locations within this research was afforded to me due to my role as MIF staff member and volunteer. The principle of 'do no harm' was utilised in the process of gaining access to MIF as an institution more broadly via various formal and informal gatekeepers (Marshall and Rossman, 1999), and also in order to gain consent from potential interviewees, with honesty and openness about the nature of the research being key throughout the research period. By outlining the processes that were put into place to ensure anonymity of all participants (where possible – as highlighted on page

96), there are limits to the acquisition of consent within participant observation in public spaces), access to most intended participants and situations was granted, particularly in the case of gaining consent from interviewees.

The area in which this became a more pertinent issue was in the observation and interviewing of 'elites'; personal experience of research with MIF had taught me that those in positions of greater responsibility are not only harder to recruit to a study, but can also be more guarded in their interview responses. For example, during empirical work I had conducted in the past, one interviewee insisted on seeing interview questions in advance in order that they could prepare answers in accordance with the views of their colleagues and superiors. As a novice researcher with certain time limitations I accepted this as a part of the process, yet the less structured interview technique which has been applied here, as well as concerns that such preparation may limit the usefulness of the data, meant that I was keen to avoid repetition of this situation. Guarantees of anonymity (which were not offered in my MA research), as well as a position as a MIF employee, helped to overcome this reticence, with the majority of participants (particularly within MIF but also those outside the organisation) showing a willingness to help as well as an interest in the subject area of the research more generally.

In the first instance, the issue of access was broached with my line manager at MIF, and then, closer to the 2013 Festival, with the Volunteer Coordinators of MIF13. As a volunteer myself during 2011, there was an existing rapport with the staff in this area which led to some level of acceptance within the field (May, 2001), and whilst access to higher level actors was not necessarily gained directly through these individuals, it was possible to not only formalise my intention to play the role of observer as well as volunteer, but gain advice on the most appropriate gatekeepers to approach in order to gain further access. Throughout my time at MIF, the rapport built through previous engagement with the Festival – as well as my position as an employee – helped to create an easy flow of conversation both in interviews and during periods of observation more generally, minimising any issues of access that may have occurred were these personal and professional connections not made.

5.3.2 Ethics

This 'insider' position, whilst key in terms of arranging access, did lead to a need to carefully consider both ethical implications and questions of positionality. During the process both of participant observation and interviewing, the main ethical objective was

to "avoid harming the participants", primarily by "not invading their privacy and not deceiving them" (Flick, 2006: 46). It was therefore important to adopt the attitude of "ethnomethodological indifference" (Flick, 2006: 69) wherever possible, in order to avoid *a priori* judgements of situations, as well as to inform participants (wherever possible) of the intentions of the research. Taylor and Bogdan's advice to be "truthful but vague" (1984: 25) was followed here, with this recommendation proving to be of particular use in allowing participants to understand the nature of the research without giving specific detail on likely areas of critique. As noted above, anonymity was ensured for all participants (whether informed participants such as interviewees, colleagues at MIF or fellow MIF volunteers who would come into close contact with the observation process, or uninformed members of the general public more loosely related to observation), with all quotes and reflections attributed to numbers rather than participants' real names.

These measures enabled this research to avoid any risks to participants, where risk is defined as "potential physical or psychological harm, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project might generate" (ESRC, 2010: 26)[12]. Safety was not a particular issue in the context of this research; however particular care for personal safety was taken when conducting observations at night, and safety of data was sought by keeping all data under lock and key when not in the field, as specified within University of Sheffield guidelines. All research received ethical approval from the University of Sheffield in June 2012.

5.3.3 Personal Role and Positionality

By reprising a volunteer role I have played previously within MIF, as well as completing my role as part-time administrator over the course of 15 months, I ensured that I was able to fit into the environment (Marshall and Rossman, 1999), increasing the potential for any observations made to be those of a naturally occurring situation. The existing relationship with some members of MIF staff aided in the building of relationships with a broader range of individuals, helping to "deal with complexities in relationships that inevitably emerge during fieldwork" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 87). Inevitably, there were times at which the presence of a researcher was not desirable for participants, or when that access is refused, particularly in the case of meetings in the MIF offices related to elements of the Festival that had not yet been disclosed to the public. As

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[12] Whilst this research is not ESRC funded, these guidelines are comparable to those of The University of Sheffield

touched upon in outlining the interview methods employed here, in these cases it was necessary to withdraw from certain situations, which, whilst not ideal, was an important part in maintaining relationships in order to allow the research to continue.

Beyond my role as an employee and volunteer, I believe that "Researchers should be aware of the ways in which their own biography is a fundamental part of the research process" (May, 2001: 21), therefore I accept that my role both as staff member/volunteer and researcher was bound up in my own beliefs about the importance of culture, and my own values which are bound up with issues of culture, history and power (May, 2001), just as the values of any participants were also related to these contextual situations. As King and Horrocks note, "As researchers we all bring to the research process our own individual morality...Our moral outlook has been shaped by the different experiences, events, and social and cultural locations that constitute our lives." (2010: 104), and this positionality is something which was reflected upon during the course of the research, particularly through the use of field diaries. In particular, the habitual writing of a field diary allowed the space in which to regain a critical frame of mind with regard to MIF, a frame of mind that can be difficult to keep when working in roles that require consistent levels of positivity and enthusiasm regarding the Festival's programme and practices.

5.3.4 Personal Definitions and Reflexivity

> "The word [reflexivity] itself implies reflection and thoughtfulness but this intuitive reading belies the extensive complexity and impact of reflexivity in terms of theoretical understandings and the practicalities of 'doing' qualitative research" (King and Horrocks, 2010: 125).

As this quote shows, the process of reflexivity within research is not a straightforward one. As such, great care was taken to practice reflexivity in all areas of research. Perhaps the main area of reflexivity here is that of 'personal reflexivity', related to the researcher's beliefs and experiences, such as those around issues of gender, class or ethnicity. In this case, there has been the issue that my own conception of culture, which forms part of the background to this research, is unavoidably linked to my upbringing, background and personal tastes, primarily comprising the kinds of activities that I have embraced at some point throughout life: music, books, museums, theatres, art. Clearly this is a conception that can be equated to 'high culture' or an upper/middle class upbringing that could be seen as similar to the background of the cultural and civic

elites that have been the subject of much of this research, yet it has been my intention to remain open to alternative conceptions to my own.

Whilst this positionality cannot be avoided, indeed, as King and Horrocks have commented upon, "many of us have stories of how personal experiences have set in motion our own particular research journeys" (2010: 128), it should be made clear that the elements of my upbringing highlighted above have led to a personal belief in the value of art and culture as a public good. As outlined in the previous chapter (on pages 59-62), culture is not seen here in the biological sense, but nor is it intended to focus wholly upon the anthropological meaning, whereby culture is seen more as a description of everyday life. Although there is an ethnographic element to my own understanding, culture has not been used as a means to encompass the whole of everyday life, and instead the focus here is predominantly (though not solely) upon culture as product or object that is both produced and consumed within particular socio-political contexts.

Further to this 'personal reflexivity', there is also the need for some form of 'epistemological reflexivity', whereby theoretical assumptions are continually re-addressed and challenged as part of the research process. It has seemed that an appropriate method for approaching culture within the context of urban regeneration and urban festivals is by applying Grossberg's four crucial points of cultural studies: "cultural studies is supposed to be hard; cultural studies is supposed to be surprising; cultural studies has to avoid allowing either theory or politics to substitute for analysis; and cultural studies is supposed to be modest" (2006: 6), with the third of these being particularly pertinent here, emphasising the importance of a balance between theory and politics. The tendency of both policy and academic literature to lack a clear definition of culture, and the tensions surrounding its use, suggests a level of complexity at work which cannot necessarily be understood through definitions alone. It has therefore been important to revisit my own understanding of culture throughout the research process, and compare this understanding to the ways that other parties seem to define culture in order to maintain a level of reflexivity. Perhaps above all, I am in agreement with Fornas *et al* who maintain that "efforts should be undertaken to make even critical cultural research useful, demonstrating how such knowledge-seeking helps to solve, or at least deal with, urgent societal problems on several levels" (2009: 8).

Perhaps the most challenging exercise with respect to reflexivity has been the managing of the 'multiple selves' I have occupied as PhD researcher, MIF employee, cultural consumer and MIF volunteer, with these 'selves' leading to a range of conflicts such as

those around critical distance highlighted above. According to King and Horrocks, "a central facet of reflexivity is to consider how we might account for these different selves and the part they play in co-constructing…our research" (2010: 135). A consistent awareness of these different 'selves' and the contradictions or challenges that occurred as I balanced these roles has formed a part of my field diaries, as reflexivity has been sought throughout the research process. Even taking into account the areas of contention related to the methodology pursued here, there are inevitable biases at play due to positionality.

This particularly internal view of a case study organisation has, as has already been specified, afforded greater access to cultural and political elites within MIF and MCC, and enabled a close reading of day-to-day practices and micro-processes that would not have been available through other means. However, the methodological strengths here in terms of the depth and detail of the resulting research must be considered alongside various limitations, particularly the difficulty in maintaining critical distance, but also more practical considerations such as responsibilities as an employee leaving limited time in which to connect with a broader range of interviewees. It is clear, therefore, that the research presented here must be viewed as an in-depth reading of MIF and its relation to the way Manchester is perceived primarily by those cultural elites who have a say in the formation of this perception, whilst claims to the way in which those understandings play out amongst the wider population cannot be made due to the interview sample.

5.4 Conclusion

Through pursuing this methodology, the intention has been not only to develop an in-depth knowledge of the construction and mobilisation of culture within MIF and Manchester more broadly, but to contribute to wider discussions about the ways in which cities utilise cultural events to represent the city to the wider world. In accordance with Marshall and Rossman's description of the qualitative researcher as someone who "Systematically reflects on who she is in the inquiry", and "Is sensitive to her personal biography and how it shapes the study" (1999: 3), personal positionality and motivation runs throughout the methods outlined above, yet I believe that this serves to benefit the study of culture, providing insight that goes beyond the more common economic focus on event evaluation and is "more than a reflection of our opinions and prejudices: it substantiates, refutes, organizes or generates our theories and produces evidence which

may challenge not only our own beliefs, but also those of society in general" (May, 2001: 9).

The methods employed here – particularly the ethnographic elements of both participant observation and interviews – and the duration over which they were practiced has enabled a detailed understanding of the ways in which MIF helps to form representations of Manchester, and the ways in which these are understood by a range of cultural and political elites, challenging commonplace understandings of cultural value as reduced to economic impact as well as problematising the power relations that enable certain cultural events to impact upon broader understandings of the contemporary city, and contributing to the field of culture-led regeneration by offering a methodology that differs from those often employed within this field.

In the chapters that follow, these themes are drawn out in a number of ways. Chapter 6 addresses the historical trajectory of Manchester that has led to the creation and support of MIF, focusing in particular on the branding of the city as 'Original Modern' that has occurred since 2007 in an attempt to reposition the city following a period of decline, in no small part through the city's cultural outputs such as MIF. Following on from this, Chapter 7 offers a closer look at MIF's events and day-to-day practices and micro-processes, describing how these contribute to the image of both the Festival and the city that have been discussed throughout Chapter 6, considering in particular the kinds of tensions that are evident here, with these two chapters therefore covering the ways in which MIF is both a production, and producer of, understandings of the city. Finally, Chapter 8 takes this evidence in order to explore whether MIF can be considered as an elite project primarily concerned with economic strategies, or whether other factors come to the fore, and whether the positioning of Manchester through cultural events as seen here constitutes more than an exercise in place-marketing.

6 Forming Visions of the City

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the question of how visions and understandings of Manchester are formed through and by MIF. It is intended to provide further context as to the development of representations of Manchester through MIF; covering the historical trajectory through which the Festival emerged, its links to the concept or ethos of 'Original Modern' (developed by Manchester City Council (MCC) at the same point as MIF), the networks of individuals and organisations involved in developing these representations, and the ways in which these individuals and organisations view the city.

The focus here is on the history of these representations and the networks involved, whereas later chapters consider the practices and processes involved in this production in further detail, and the outcomes that spring from this. In particular, consideration is given here to both the idea of a city identity, an idea that emerged in Chapter 4 following discussion of the potential for city habitus (through analysis of the discourse involved in the historical context of MIF's inception), and also the role of power and cultural capital in Manchester's cultural and civic networks – power and capital that are used to promote certain ideas of cultural value.

Initially, a historical trajectory of the development of MIF is presented, before an in-depth account of the specific development of Original Modern. Finally, the networks involved in the image-creation that has come about as a result of both MIF and Original Modern are considered, looking at both cultural and civic elites alongside some more unusual networks centred on MIF's outreach arm, MIF Creative, and the MIF Volunteers. In particular, this exploration uncovers the ways in which these vital networks view the city, forming the base from which particular outputs from, and practices of, MIF are then discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2 Tracing the Historical Trajectory of MIF

"Manchester is the city where the industrial revolution, above anywhere else, was created and probably refined to its ideal point in the nineteenth Century. […] As we had that central part in creating the modern world as we know it now, Manchester will have a central part in creating the modern world we will know in the future" (IV9, MCC Employee)

It is the position outlined above by this MCC employee that highlights a concern within Manchester's political and cultural elite about the importance of the city's historical trajectory to its contemporary identity. Thus, we begin by tracing MIF's historical trajectory, positioning the Festival as itself a product of pre-existing understandings of Manchester formed by both a romanticised notion of the 19th Century city of industry and the outcomes of more recent events such as the IRA bomb (1996) and the Commonwealth Games (2002) that were outlined in Chapter 2 for their role in positioning Manchester as a city of importance following the decline of industry in the late 20th Century. The way in which these historical threads are tied together via a number of associated (perceived) traits is also explored, particularly ideas of radicalism, innovation and the 'city of firsts', all of which were specifically used by both Marketing Manchester and MCC in their post-Commonwealth Games branding exercise that MIF was closely connected to. Following this, MIF is then positioned within this landscape of particular traits: as a product of an edited and compelling history focused very much on past glories and the hope for similar future glory.

6.2.1 From the City of Industry to the Commonwealth Games

MIF can be viewed as a product of interpretations of Manchester's past and historical trajectory, from the Industrial Revolution to the Commonwealth Games. Perceptions of this historical trajectory, articulated both through official MIF documentation and the thoughts and feelings of numerous participants, are discussed below.

> "Manchester – the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, Cottonopolis, 24 hour party city and now the scene of the first ever Manchester International Festival…Manchester's pivotal role in classical and popular music has inspired a festival that will focus on new music, premiering work by established and emerging international artists. (Manchester International Festival, 2007b)

Thus opens the accompanying leaflet for the inaugural Manchester International Festival; intending to connect MIF from the outset with a longstanding historical

trajectory of the city beginning with its position as one of the world's first industrial powers (or the world's first, according to local folklore (Hunt, 2004)). This longstanding feeling of connection with a long-gone but still resonating past was echoed by a number of participants, for example through the comments quoted above that centre around Manchester's role in the creation of the modern. What exactly this "ideal point" that this particular individual saw Manchester as reaching was not elaborated upon, yet there is a sense here of a desire to be a city ahead of its time and pushing boundaries.

However, a sense of disconnect between the level of importance ascribed to Manchester in the 19th Century, and the state of the city at the beginning of the 21st Century was outlined by some interviewees, one of whom referred to the city's fame as having shifted from being "the principal city of industry, with a whole range of socio-political factors that were kind of in a way the collateral to that; so the labour movement, the rights of the individual, even the suffragette movement, the trade union movement, the co-operative movement" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator), to a city primarily known worldwide for its football teams. This particular MIF collaborator suggested that "this latter awareness of Manchester as a city of football […] outweighs other readings of the place" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator), then expanded upon this:

> "so many of the things that in a way defined Manchester in the early 20th Century have fallen away, leaving the kind of residual post-industrial city without a clear and defined global role. Except in, most publicly facing, football! Which is fine, but football as a signifier has a lot of kind of associations, which are not particularly attractive, or urgent, or important to the individuals that a place needs to drive it forward in the world" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator).

There is a suggestion here that the connotations associated with a city of football do not match up with the calibre of a pioneering city of industry, that sporting prowess does not match up with the level of ambition shown by the city in a past life. Of course, this displays not only an idealised notion of industrialism, but also a limited reading of the impact of sporting achievement that may be emblematic of differences in understandings of culture between cultural or artistic actors and their civic or community counterparts. Indeed, despite these concerns that an overemphasis on the sporting city may obscure other readings of place, a number of events and activities from the late 20th Century onwards – particularly the hosting of the Commonwealth Games – have further developed the understanding of place that has led to the inception of MIF. Yet there is a residual tension around Manchester's role as a sporting

city, as whilst this reputation attracts tourism it is not the kind of tourism that is focused around attraction of the 'creative class', with this being alluded to in the suggestion above that sport is not relevant to those individuals that can progress the city culturally.

Aside from the association of the city with football which became increasingly strong throughout the 20th Century and has remained prominent ever since, a number of specific events have helped to develop understandings of Manchester and its post-industrial role, and, as discussed on pages 16-17, the IRA Bomb and the Commonwealth Games are oft-cited within literature on the city's development (see, for example, Holden, 2002; Quilley, 2002). Interviewees within this research also viewed these as turning points in Manchester's fortune and development. As one interviewee explained, "you've got a massive growth spurt initiated by the IRA blowing the place up, but that's been capitalised on by people going: actually, do you know what, here's an opportunity. And it's the opportunity that's interesting, that's what I think is good about this city", explaining that this is why they perceive the city to have been "quite clever at regenerating itself" (IV12, MIF Employee).

The Commonwealth Games (hosted by Manchester in 2002) also forms a perceived key turning point in the city's post-industrial fortunes, with many members of cultural and civic elites proving keen to stress the importance of the Games, suggesting that "the momentum gained from the Commonwealth Games a led to this thing about brand" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator), and connecting it to the city's broader cultural trajectory:

> "When we bid for the Olympic Games, we had a very strong cultural offer in it, and then we had the Commonwealth Games, obviously huge impact in terms of visitors to the city and tourist potential, but by then of course we'd developed the Original Modern concept. So we were very good by that time at being able to articulate what it is that sells a city and all the different components of culture being an important part of that" (IV6, MCC Employee)

The comments gleaned from various interviewees (particularly IV20 and IV6) show that there is a tension between viewing Manchester's sporting fame as a hindrance to people's perception of the cultural and radical city, and an understanding of sport as one of many tools in the city's ongoing regeneration. There is an awareness, however, of the saleable city as outlined by IV6 above, and a suggestion that this addition of a cultural agenda to a sporting agenda contributes to the marketing of what some believe to be the city's unique outlook, for example, through the bidding process for the Olympic and

Commonwealth Games, "Manchester was one of the first cities to develop what has now become Marketing Manchester; unusually for a city and unusually for that time, culture was always considered as one of the drivers" (IV6, MCC Employee) (although it is difficult to find evidence to confirm that Manchester's position is particularly unusual here, particularly given the fact that the development of Marketing Manchester and MCC's associated cultural strategies came after the likes of Glasgow's year as ECOC).

This focus on culture as a driver of development in the city was touched upon by interviewees from both MCC and MIF, with one interviewee explaining that a number of small festivals held within the city from the early 1990s onwards "made us realise that if you got the theme right, Manchester could do something very specific and very tied in with Manchester, linked very closely to the cultural infrastructure of the city" (IV6, MCC Employee), and another explaining how a research initiative called 'Raising the Game' in the 2000s "indicated that people were not visiting Manchester for culture, they were coming for shopping, nightlife and sport" (IV2, MIF Employee) – with the result of this research leading to the development of the Creative Tourist[13] website, which "has become something which we believe has increased cultural tourism. The Raising the Game project we felt did succeed in putting Manchester's cultural agenda on the map, and MIF has been part of that." (IV2, MIF Employee). Some were keen to stress that all of these events began to merge:

> "you've got these big sporting events that we're bidding on and getting more and more successful, the smaller arts product and arts festivals and events which are happening in neighbourhoods as well as the city centre, getting really good at putting on big events in the city centre, and at the same time through Marketing Manchester understanding the tourism, attracting more and more big conferences, and people who come for a day for conferences need a reason to come and their whole programme is enhanced by visits to cultural facilities and programmes and so on" (IV6, MCC Employee)

As with the connection to the city's industrial past, MIF – from the outset – has been keen to represent itself as explicitly connected to this more recent history revolving around the Commonwealth Games, with the official evaluation of MIF07 stressing that:

> "The Festival was conceived as a way of building on the success of the Commonwealth Games. The Games were evaluated to have been a major success and a very significant contributor to

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[13] Creative Tourist is a website providing listings and comment on arts and tourism. It began in Manchester during the mid-2000s and has now expanded to cover activity across the North of England. More details can be found at http://www.creativetourist.com/

the positive profile and economic well-being of Manchester, raising awareness and positive attitudes about the City amongst the resident population, nationally and internationally" (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2008: 22)

Thus there is an ongoing awareness that, aside from the more tangible economic impacts offered by sporting and cultural events, investment in such activities can help to reposition the way a city is viewed and understood by a wider public, particularly if there is a level of joined-up thinking in terms of the traits or characteristics that are drawn upon in the process, and that this can be achieved through a focus on image and the changing of attitudes rather than through large-scale material change.

6.2.2 Associated traits: Radicalism, innovation and the 'city of firsts'

Temporally, there is quite a leap between the two points of 19th Century industrialism and 21st Century sporting and cultural prowess that has been cited within the documentation of MIF and Marketing Manchester and the points of view stressed to me by interviewees themselves. During the course of the research process not once did any interviewees acknowledge the temporal or conceptual gap between these facets of Manchester's history; it is as though these elements of the city's story are cemented into a dominant narrative that is oft-repeated and thus predominantly unchallenged.

What appears to link these disparate historical periods is the idea of the city itself (or at least those individuals and organisations within it) embodying a number of 'personality' traits, such as radicalism and innovation, as well as a focus on Manchester as a city of firsts. Having explained the city's recent history of cultural regeneration, IV6 explained how MIF was designed to contribute to this, stating that "the theme that the whole project to start the Festival was based on was ideas and innovation. Because that's what Manchester's history is" (IV6, MCC Employee). Innovation and 'being different' were taken as part of Manchester's identity by those involved in a post-Commonwealth Games branding exercise that formed part of the development of MIF and Original Modern. As part of this, a number of characteristics of 'brand Manchester' were decided upon by elites from MCC and Marketing Manchester. In summarising the exercise, one key player within the process explained to me that:

> "key elements were [that] Manchester was inclusive, and that to a certain extent was a willingness to welcome anybody from anywhere as long as they were going to contribute, and that goes back 150, 200 years; […] a live-and-let-live approach, so that people would just get on and live their lives in the way they wanted to live them as long as they weren't interfering with

other people's freedom to do the same. […] And another element was a certain amount of – often seen as Manchester arrogance – but it is attitude, it's a self-confidence, a belief that we can do what we want to do really." (IV9, MCC Employee)

There are questions over the validity of elements of this statement, for example the treatment of the working classes during the industrial revolution (see Engels, 2009), yet these ideas were relatively pervasive: similarly, an interviewee not explicitly or directly involved in the process but still a part of the city's network of cultural elites described their understanding of Manchester's identity by explaining that: "I think of political radicalism; I think of a place where people do like to enjoy themselves but at the same time they've got something to say; I feel that on the whole it's a friendly, welcoming place, but at the same time they're not short of an opinion" (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee). It is this radicalism and strength of opinion or wilfulness that is seen to tie into the enduring emphasis upon Manchester as the city of firsts, an emphasis that is widely acknowledged as feeding into the development of MIF itself:

> "a lot of it came from the conversations that Peter Saville had with Alex [Poots, MIF Artistic Director] around what the character of the city is, and about Manchester having been home to the industrial revolution, birthplace of the computer, a place that has a history of really strong music innovation and progression, and a history with the suffragettes, so kind we're gonna do it our way and this is how we want to make change happen so I think it fits and it links really well to the city and the character of the city and I think that's really important, both for the city and for the Festival." (IV17, MIF Employee)

Although this understanding of Manchester may only be evident to those outside the city from its marketing and from explanations of the background of events such as MIF, there is a sense amongst those born and bred in Manchester – or certainly those to whom I spoke – that this very much forms a part of the city's identity, or at least that, to them, it is part of the 'reality' of the city:

> "I think British people generally cling to past victories, don't they, and everybody who grows up in Manchester knows that they split the atom here, that they made the computer here, and you know, all Manchester's firsts. But I do think culturally there is a reason that Manchester has many firsts; I think the self-educated of the North, going back a hundred years, are the reasons why it's such an innovative city. A general socialist viewpoint" (IV16, MIF Artist)

The frequency of these comments suggests there may be a sustained self-image of Manchester, although perhaps a wider range of interviewees would be needed to test if

it is shared beyond the key actors involved here. It does seem, however, that there is a shared understanding amongst those involved in MIF's inception and continuation that the Festival is born not only of a Council-led branding or regeneration exercise, but also of Manchester's historical narrative and identity, albeit a truncated or summarised and particular version of this. In particular, it should be noted that the previous quote accounts for Manchester's radical political past (a history including both the rise of Chartism and the development of the National Society for Women's Suffrage during the 19th Century (see Haslam, 2000 amongst others)). A "general socialist viewpoint" is perhaps not an accurate description of contemporary Manchester, with other northern cities such as Sheffield arguably continuing to show more of this character than Manchester with MCC's embrace of elements of neoliberalism such as a focus on competitiveness (seen for example through the city's bids for the Olympics and Commonwealth Games).

6.2.3 Positioning MIF within a historical trajectory

The discussion above suggests that a particular constructed urban identity is embraced within Manchester's civic and cultural elites, drawing selectively on particular elements of the city's historical trajectory, and that the promotion or perpetuation of this identity by those with levels of symbolic power and cultural capital is a process that MIF is seen to be a part of, with MIF and its events therefore ascribed cultural value by this group. From the Festival's inception it has drawn upon these themes emphasised by MIF employees, council employees and other cultural and civic actors, and is claimed to be another point in this history of firsts, with the official programme of the first Festival opening with the statement:

> "The inspiration for Manchester International Festival is the city itself. Manchester was the birthplace of modern industrial society and so it seems only fitting that this city should launch the world's first international festival of original, new work" (Manchester International Festival, 2007a: 1).

An accompanying leaflet for MIF07 also draws upon this, suggesting that "Manchester and the surrounding region is recognised for its contribution to innovation and it is this heritage which has inspired the creation of a festival programme that spans the spectrum of popular culture, arts and innovation" (Manchester International Festival, 2007b). It is clear that this positioning is not simply intended to cement a particular identity of the city within the local or national field, but an international arena, as the leaflet continues: "Manchester's position as a truly international city will be enhanced as

many new productions will world premiere in the city before touring to other international destinations" (Manchester International Festival, 2007b). This ambition has, if anything, increased in importance over time (as will be discussed further in the following chapter), with Festival Director Alex Poots claiming in an interview with 53 Degrees magazine in July 2013 that rather than looking at a comparison with London, "Manchester has looked further for its points of reference, its competition, its influences", adding that "I've noticed there's very little opposition to Manchester's festival being quite outward looking" (Poots, quoted in Smith, 2013: 15).

This shared understanding of Manchester as a city embodying certain traits over a lengthy period of time shows the concept of a city identity formed or given weight by city branding as being a persuasive form of rhetoric. There is resonance here with the concept of habitus, relating to the seemingly self-perpetuating structures of identity that have helped maintain a level of consistency in the way that Manchester is represented by certain groups and individuals. Bourdieu explains that "The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history" (1990: 54. Original emphasis), indicating that habitus is a way of understanding how history repeats itself, or how shared identity traits can be remarkably enduring (as is constructed as being the case in Manchester, this 'city of firsts').

It appears to be the case here that whilst it is perhaps a stretch to refer to this perceived identity of the city as habitus (as discussed in Chapter 4), there is an apparent desire on the part of the city's cultural elite to portray it as such in order to feel that the city's current cultural activities are an innate part of some kind of shared urban experience despite there not being a distinct connection between the city's contemporary and past cultural outputs. In the case of Manchester, this claimed habitus can be seen as being connected to a city brand or ethos (a connection which will be further commented on in Chapter 8), that of Original Modern to which attention now turns.

6.3 The Role of Original Modern

"So many of the ideas that continue to shape our world first found their voice in Manchester. Alongside the Satanic mills and booming factories, here was where traditions crumbled, urban life was pioneered, and originality thrived. Here was where the modern was born" (Tristram Hunt, in Marketing Manchester, 2009)

This quote, taken from the brochure released to promote Original Modern in 2009, shows the historical position from which Original Modern claims to originate. The simultaneous focus on both past and future suggested by the 'traits' discussed above, then, links closely to the city's brand or 'ethos' of Original Modern, developed for Manchester City Council by Peter Saville, the city's Creative Director, in the mid 2000s (see Figure 6.1 For the list of traits deemed Original Modern by MCC and Marketing Manchester). Set against a backdrop of a past (failed) branding exercise by MCC (as one interviewee explained, this past exercise was akin in some ways to the Glasgow's Miles Better campaign, and "they tried to create a strapline, and their strapline was 'we're up and going'. Well 'we're up and going' doesn't actually say much about Manchester, other than it infers we might once have been down and out" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee)), Original Modern's primary focus is on Manchester as the city of firsts.

Here I will describe how Original Modern was not intended to be a strapline, and instead was perceived by its creator and those with close connection to the process (such as Marketing Manchester) as a 'call to action' that is best articulated through activities rather than words alone, connecting this branding exercise with a trajectory of Mancunian storytelling or myth-making that may be perceived as the kind of city identity discussed in Chapter 4. The way in which MIF is cited by many as the first or best manifestation of Original Modern is highlighted, linking back to the power to name the Festival as a significant part of Manchester's historical trajectory and cultural identity, allowed by the positions of those connected to it as holders of high levels of cultural capital.

As outlined above, the key players in the development of Original Modern were MCC and the artist Peter Saville, along with Marketing Manchester, who have been the main disseminators of the brand identity. The catalyst for this activity was an increased awareness of 'brand' on the part of MCC's leaders following the Commonwealth Games and a desire to maintain the momentum the Games had given towards repositioning Manchester as a destination for tourism and investment. Original Modern is thus explicitly linked with an increasing and ongoing commitment on the part of the council towards culture-led regeneration (as outlined in MCC's cultural strategy (MCC, 2002)), with the intention being that the discourse surrounding this ethos would cement an idea of the city's brand ethos in the minds of both residents and – perhaps more importantly – potential investors, with, as we shall see further in Chapter 8, a level of contention around which of these audiences is deemed to be most important.

6.3.1 Unpacking Original Modern: 'It's not a strapline'

"it was not the intention for Original Modern to be any kind of slogan or strapline, it was supposed to be an ethos to pursue, and an ethos to pursue across any area of activity" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

As in the quote above, a key element of Original Modern is that those with a role in its development do not wish for it to be seen as a strapline. Instead, the intention behind the development of Original Modern, as articulated by one interviewee close to the process, was that "Sir Howard [Bernstein, Chief Executive of MCC], his question was is the perception of my brand optimised? Is Manchester thought of as positively as it could be?" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator). This artist then went on to explain that at the outset of this rebranding exercise (circa 2003) the answer was most certainly 'no' – reflecting the opinions laid out above that the city had lost a certain amount of its unique identity during the process of deindustrialisation. Thus Original Modern was intended to form a bridge between this high-profile past and the potential for future innovation:

> "it was an interesting challenge to say why can Manchester not be, at least *an* original and modern city in the 21st Century, the way it was *the* original modern city in the 19th? It's only a customised way of saying innovation for Manchester." (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

The key difference here, however, is clearly a shift in the type of originality and innovation being discussed, with the disconnect between originality in industrialism and originality in, amongst other things, culture not being specifically addressed here. It seems apparent, however, that despite this disconnect many of those involved in this rebranding process are well-versed in this story, with interviewees claiming for example that "Manchester is very much a city of creating the new world, so I think it used art culture not just to represent that, but to do that actually, to do it very practically" (IV9, MCC Employee), that "we were kind of saying yes, we're the first industrial city, so we were the Original Modern city, the city where the modern was born" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee), that "it's about looking forward not looking backwards, trying to be an originator rather than an imitator, of being able to take risks and being prepared to fail, it's about being contemporary, being inventive, being imaginative, being different. Being unique. Creating our own identity" (IV5, MIF Board Member).

Whether the phrase Original Modern alone can invoke these ideas, however, is another matter, and though not intended to be a slogan or strapline, Original Modern has perhaps been seen as this to those with less engagement in the process:

> "I didn't get it until I sat in a room and heard Peter Saville tell us why, at the launch of the Visit Manchester website. He spoke about his 'vision' of Original Modern and it made complete sense, but I completely see that from the outside it just seems a bit wanky, just a bit, [sarcastic] 'ooh, look at Manchester'" (IV2, MIF Employee)

The comment of this MIF employee suggests that, to the uninitiated (essentially all those outside of the cultural and civic elite), the idea of Original Modern comes across as being little more than a label, and indeed it is important here to question whether a brand (or 'ethos') such as this is capable of capturing or reflecting a city's identity. In order to try and avoid such reactions, Marketing Manchester produced a short book in 2009 to highlight the attributes that Original Modern is intended to represent (though the range of distribution of this book is unclear), opening with the simple subtitle of 'MANCHESTER WAS THE FIRST' (Marketing Manchester, 2009. Capitals in original). The key indicators of Original Modern (according to this publication) are outlined in Figure 7, whilst a list of the individuals and organisations deemed to reflect these values is in Figure 8, displaying the breadth that Original Modern is intended to encompass through the inclusion of civic bodies, cultural institutions, sporting groups, scientific leaders and more.

- Make a contribution to the city
- Introduce a new idea
- Be progressive
- Challenge convention
- Think global
- Be ambitious

Figure 7: The Defining Traits of 'Original Modern' (Marketing Manchester, 2009)

The list of Original Modern 'exemplars' in Figure 8 is clearly designed to position Manchester as a leader in a wide variety of areas, yet this wide-ranging selection appears confusing rather than coherent. From organisations that reflect the radical history of the city commented on above (such as the focus on co-operatives including the Co-operative Group which was launched in the city in 1863 and Unicorn Grocery), to advances in science through the likes of the Manchester Cancer Research Centre, to the successful sporting endeavours of Manchester United (MUFC) and the Team GB cycling team, there is no clear theme that runs through this list. It could be said that

each of the organisations here is pioneering in its own way, and thus connects with the Original Modern ethos, although the inclusion of both the Manchester Civil Justice Centre and MCC itself does not chime with the radical past of the city, nor does the monetarily-driven MUFC. This uneasy grouping of so many different examples is perhaps why so few of the organisations here use the label Original Modern in their day-to-day workings, with MIF being a notable exception to this.

Moving on from considering the organisations listed as Original Modern to the values that lie behind these, a representative of Marketing Manchester summarised the attributes of Original Modern as incorporating three brand values:

> "one of them is a brand value of respect: and we've got something there about attitude, edginess, enterprise, that all tie back into that brand value of respect. The second is a brand value of live and let live: and again you've got something that's about inclusivity, it's welcoming, it's tolerant. And the third is a brand value of ambition and moving forward: going places. […] Manchester's brand essence is about opportunity" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee)

This suggestion of tolerance and inclusivity was stressed by various interviewees, much as in the case of IV15 describing Manchester as 'friendly' and 'welcoming'. Yet perhaps this idea that the city is characterised by an ethos of 'live and let live' is an easy thing to claim when you possess the level of cultural capital that this interviewee possesses, as indeed the majority of interviewees within this study do. Additionally, it could be suggested that the brand values of 'inclusivity' and 'ambition' are difficult to uphold simultaneously, with clearer economic benefits of ambitions for the city's national and international standing threatening to overshadow those moves towards inclusivity (a more in-depth exploration of this kind of tension can be found in Chapter 8).

The idea is that "if we look at everything we do, look at the major initiatives that we undertake, and say that those same values of originality and modernity should be applied to them, well then people will understand that that is of Manchester" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee), so rather than being a strapline "it's more about actually driving it into the activity that we undertake, and that old Socrates quote which says the best way to get a reputation is to be what you desire to appear" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee), or, in marketing speak: "The brand is about what you give to the world!" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee). In short, "You can say Manchester, Manchester, Manchester as much as you want, but you've got to have a story to tell, and we can't always be telling the story of our past, we have to be telling the story of our

present and our future as well" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee). It is this emphasis on storytelling, therefore, that connects with the emphasis upon MIF as articulating the brand, and presenting a particular vision of the city.

- Manchester International Festival
- Andre Geim (discovered Graphene)
- Manchester Civil Justice Centre
- GB Cycling Team
- Red Vision (CGI/Visual effects company)
- Unicorn (Cooperative grocery/wholefood store)
- New Islington (Housing project/Millennium Community)
- Manchester City Council
- The Co-operative Group
- Red Productions (TV Production company)
- Mines Advisory Group (Charity)
- Islington Mill (Arts centre)
- Manchester Cancer Research Centre
- Comma Press (Not-for-profit publishing company)
- Substance (Social research cooperative)
- MediaCityUK (Media 'community', new home of BBC)
- Brian Cox
- Manchester United Football Club

Figure 8: Organisations/individuals deemed Original Modern (Marketing Manchester, 2009)

6.3.2 MIF: as the first or best articulation of Original Modern

Much like the connection between MIF and Manchester's radical history of 'firsts', the connection between MIF and Original Modern has been made explicit from the outset, with the evaluation of the inaugural Festival laying claim to the fact that "the Manchester International Festival is the first manifestation of the original modern concept" (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2008: 22). There is an understanding, as highlighted previously by IV2 on pages 118-119, that up until the early 21st Century Manchester had been lacking in its (high) cultural offer, a feeling shared by one of MIF's board members who suggests that "Manchester had a great reputation for regeneration, it had a great historic reputation for industry and commerce, it's got a great reputation for sport, it didn't have a particularly good reputation for culture and arts." (IV5, MIF Board Member), adding that therefore, "part of the Festival was about creating a great arts offering, and doing something interesting and new" (IV5, MIF Board Member), showing a clear gap in the city's offer, yet less clearly articulating why MCC began to focus on culture as the city's selling point given that other areas showed more strength. Despite this perhaps tenuous link between MIF and Original Modern, however, interviewees from MIF, MCC and Marketing Manchester all share

this sense that the Festival is a prime manifestation of the Original Modern ethos, from the idea that:

> "Original Modern [is] a brand signifier, it is a phrase which allows us in two words to understand what the brand of Manchester is, and in, that then has to be manifest in what we do and that's somewhere where the International Festival comes in" (IV9, MCC Employee)

to the explicit temporal linking of both MIF and Original Modern:

> "all of those things [the appointment of Saville as Creative Director of the city, and the development of Original Modern] collided at a very good time with what we were trying to do, but it was just such a natural thing, there was no grabbing of what Peter was doing, we're probably one of the best manifestations – he would say this if he was sat here – of Original Modern, for him the Festival articulates that incredibly well." (IV10, MIF Employee)

Many interviewees expressed a feeling that Manchester's take on urban branding here is unique, and that this is down to the council (as will be further explored below), with one suggesting that it's "astonishing for a council really, for a council to be that aware of brand. […] Something like Manchester International Festival makes that brand real." (IV2, MIF Employee). The way in which the Festival was intended to 'make the brand real', and connect specifically to the Original Modern ethos, was by focusing solely on new, original commissions. As one MCC Employee explains, "other places in the UK had developed a pretty strong narrative and positioning around culture of music, festivals, and we needed to be distinctive, and we came up with this notion of well, you can't be more distinctive than producing original work all the time!" (IV8, MCC Employee), and another claiming that MIF is the best articulation of Original Modern "because it goes back to original thinking, and the way that Alex [Poots] picks up an original piece of music, Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, and does it in this year's Festival in a completely different way[14], it's all about that, the original concept, original history in Manchester, and giving it that modern twist. So it's the proximity of the original with the modern that makes Manchester very distinctive" (IV6, MCC Employee), although it is clear here that originality within MIF is often conceptualised as a new take on existing work.

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[14] In fact, MIF13's take on The Rite of Spring was cancelled – the only MIF show to suffer this fate – suggesting that "being able to take risks and being prepared to fail" is indeed part of the Festival's attitude

Running throughout the intentions of Original Modern, and the understandings of both Original Modern and its links to MIF, espoused by the members of Manchester's cultural and civic elite quoted here, is the idea of articulating difference, and positioning Manchester as set apart from other cities through Original Modern and MIF: "I think the USP of the Festival being artist led, and only showing new work, fits in perfectly with that view of Manchester being the first." (IV1, MIF Employee). Whilst there has not been scope here to contrast MIF's adoption of the phrase Original Modern with that of the other organisations listed in Figure 8, it seems that MIF is the only organisation on this list that has continually made specific reference to its Original Modern connections, although despite interviewees' discussion of the phrase, and its inclusion in past MIF documentation, a current search of mif.co.uk displays no results for these two words. This gradual disappearance of Original Modern to all but the initial creators and supporters of the brand ethos has been discussed by Jonathan Schofield, a local journalist, who suggests:

> "Maybe Original Modern was always merely a tag we attached for a few years to a quality which has always been here. It is after all shorthand for Manchester being its brainiest and best. It probably needed reaffirming ten years ago but now should be allowed to retreat into its kennel" (Schofield, 2013)

So if Original Modern as a pairing of words has had little impact on those outside involvement in either its creation, or its primary manifestation in MIF, there are questions to be asked as to its effectiveness and the impact it has on the way in which the city is viewed. It appears evident here that it is primarily understood and appreciated by those with a level of control over the city's processes of branding and promotion (i.e. those with some level of power within the city's cultural and civic spheres), but also that the ethos it represents has some success in articulating a set of connotations within the city that certain groups identify with.

6.3.3 Original Modern, the power to name and cultural capital

As with the particular points in history outlined at the beginning of the chapter, the decision process behind the choosing of certain traits – and indeed events – to be incorporated into Original Modern speaks of a process whereby those with a high level of cultural capital and symbolic power become those with a power to name: in this case, the power to name particular events or organisations as Original Modern and therefore incorporate them into an internationally distributed articulation of the city, potentially

affecting the way in which Manchester is viewed worldwide. As a high-ranking member of MCC explained:

> "I think every city can have a brand, I think what every city hasn't got, which it needs to have, is the values which underpin that brand […] So we want people when they see Manchester as a brand to think of progressive, dynamic, can do. You know, success. And I think the Original Modern side of it is timeless really, by definition. I think it helps to create a platform, a narrative about what the city is really about. And I think it's a fair and accurate reflection of our being really" (IV8, MCC Employee)

The question of whether it is indeed a "fair and accurate reflection of our being" will be addressed in Chapter 8, but there is a clear indication here that a number of individuals and organisations within Manchester have spent much of the past decade pushing for the city to be seen in a particular light by emphasising a number of qualities that are perceived to be inherent traits, or a myth-making process intended to signify a kind of city identity. The following section explores these individuals and organisations, critically evaluating the networks that they form and the structures of power and governance involved in the processes of formation of urban identity.

6.4 Cultural and civic networks of power and governance

We turn now to the networks involved in the creation of MIF and Original Modern, both the traditional cultural and civic networks and the more alternative networks that have grown within MIF over the years, namely those surrounding volunteers and MIF's outreach programme, MIF Creative. There is a clear disconnect between the motivations of some of the networks involved, with some motivations proving more compatible than others. Following a discussion of this situation, Manchester's political landscape is highlighted in order to give context to the sustained nature of some of these networks, and thus their level of power within the cultural landscape of the city. The networks involved in MIF and its positioning as part of Manchester's cultural history are perceived to revolve around another one of the city's oft-cited 'traits', that of successful partnership working, particularly the forging of public/private partnerships between the council, arms-length agencies, private companies, arts organisations and others. There is criticism from some that MCC does not understand culture or MIF despite its long-standing use of culture-as-tool, but conversely opinion has also been expressed that this means 'experts' in the field are simply allowed to fulfil their roles with minimal council interference.

Within these networks there are a number of 'usual suspects', comprised of those with a significant level of cultural capital. Increasingly, however, MIF has brought together more alternative networks that are less connected with both the cultural 'scene' of the city and the business-led field of public/private partnerships, such as those of the MIF13 MIF Creative project *The Biospheric Project* and the MIF Volunteers. The development of the networks which allow MIF to exist are contingent upon a number of factors, particularly the city's stable political leadership (Manchester has been a Labour-led council for over 40 years, with the Leader and Chief Executive holding their positions for 19 and 17 years respectively) and the shared visions that can emerge from such stability (though the limits as to whose 'vision' this is must be noted).

6.4.1 Public/private partnership

It has been widely cited over the years that Manchester is a city of successful partnership working (Robson, 2002), with the council forging strong relationships with partners from both the public and private sector. This was cited by many of my interviewees to be a source of the city's success, and one of the reasons that endeavours such as MIF succeed. This was confidently posited by some as a reason for other cities to look upon Manchester almost enviously, as though "people think, oh look at Manchester, how come they pull these things off, and it's purely partnership working. It's what Manchester's been good at for 20 years. We're at our best when we're all working together to achieve the impossible" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee). Explaining this further, one council employee suggested to me that MCC "provides a very important interface between civil society, business, and a whole range of social milieu and the political world", adding that "Manchester City Council has one and only one reason for existence, and that is Manchester" (IV9, MCC Employee). This final statement seems an obvious one for a spokesperson of a local council to make, and yet, as with many other statements given by a number of interviewees here, it is delivered with the sort of confidence that suggests Manchester is somehow unique in this respect; another example of the way a myth is made real in the minds of certain individuals by talking about the city in a convincing manner (a theme that shall be expanded upon in Chapter 7).

Some see that a distinct part of this approach to partnership working manifest in the city is that the council itself runs very little, particularly in terms of the city's cultural offer (although this is not necessarily different from other city councils):

> "You know, we don't run the National Football Museum. We don't tend to do things ourselves, we tend to work in partnership with the experts who are good at doing those things. […] We fund 20 organisations directly, but then beyond that, we know most cultural organisations in the city, and we know how to put people together to deliver different things, so when it comes to the Festival we knew who the people were that we needed to talk to" (IV6, MCC Employee)

Elaborating on this, another council employee suggests to me that "to a certain extent the success of the city will depend on the effectiveness with which we play that role of bringing a whole range of players together" (IV9, MCC Employee), and there is a view that a particularly successful example of this was the Commonwealth Games, after which MIF was conceived. So, for example, "arms length agencies like Marketing Manchester worked alongside the people who were actually delivering the Games, to ensure Manchester benefitted from the successful hosting of the Games" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee), with this partnership leading forwards into the city's next steps in cultural development[15].

Interviewees displayed mixed feelings about the nature of the relationship directly between MCC and MIF, and the extent to which the council understands, or needs to understand, culture and the arts. One interviewee suggested of MCC and the private funders of MIF that "I don't really think they 'get' any of it. Certain people do, but collectively it's a little bit of a kind of prodigal child that the family don't quite understand" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator), continuing to say that, particularly around the time of MIF's inception, "in a way, the city itself, in the guise of the council, didn't have people who were culturally attuned to understand what Manchester's cultural pulse-beat was", suggesting that "the city actually doesn't really understand its cultural provenance", and giving the example that "They sort of think Factory Records and the Haçienda were just some music." (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator). Though it should be noted that whilst artists such as IV20 can be quick to critique MCC's understanding of arts and culture, they do at times rely on the patronage of the Council to continue their work. In contrast to this sceptical point of view, however, others feel that this potential lack of understanding does not in fact hinder the relationship:

> "I think if you're going to do something as bonkers and as big as this has become, then I think you've got to have a hundred

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[15] A cost benefit analysis of Manchester's Commonwealth Games deemed the Games to be a success on a number of measures, from the "6,300 direct FTE jobs attributable to the Games", to economic benefits comparable with the rate of return for the preceding four Olympic Games, to over £670m of investment in regeneration infrastructure (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2002)

percent support from the city, and you've got to be able to understand that should it actually go pear-shaped, the city will still be there at the end of it, but then you need somebody to have those ballsy conversations with people. So I think it's partly down to the support of the city and partly down to the fact they were clever enough to appoint Alex [Poots]. Frankly. Who doesn't take no from anybody." (IV12, MIF Employee)

This ties into the suggestion above that the niche that MCC have forged for themselves in terms of culture and the arts is to delegate responsibility to others who can do the job more effectively than they could themselves. The partnership between MCC and MIF is viewed, particularly by the MIF employees I interviewed, as one of trust built upon the Festival's ongoing reputation for drawing financial investment into the city (the economic focus of the Festival will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8), with one interviewee stating that "They trust us, but they only trust us because we deliver. As soon as we stop delivering – God forbid – they won't trust us." (IV10, MIF Employee). There is therefore a level of symbiosis between the predominantly economic motivations of MCC and the artistic aspirations of MIF: at present each appears to deliver what the other requires.

It is not just the council, however, that sees benefits in partnering with MIF. Beyond arms length agencies and public bodies, MIF's funders over the years show the kinds of partnerships that have been forged between the partially publically funded charity that is the Festival, and numerous private companies (see Appendix 1 for a full list of funders) These partnerships benefit MIF in numerous ways, not just from the money they receive directly but also through the offering of goods and services. For example, Bruntwood, a national provider of office space based in Manchester, allow MIF to use their office space for free, and have done since the Festival's inception (with the offices moving between three different sites over the years). Much of the company's signage – including the banners hung outside Blackfriars House (MIF's current home) in the run-up to MIF13 – incorporate the slogan 'making a difference through the arts', and five of the nine photographs accompanying Bruntwood's website description of Blackfriars House are of the MIF offices[16], giving an indication of the value that certain private companies place upon partnership with arts organisations.

The company's website justifies its long-term support of the Festival by stating that they recognise "its potential to bring both short-term impacts to the city's visitor economy and longer-term benefits to its international profile" (Bruntwood, 2013), tallying with

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[16] As of 24/03/15, available at http://www.bruntwood.co.uk/blackfriarshouse/office-space

reasoning given by MCC amongst others. So there are arts organisations, public bodies, and private funders all forging working relationships based around a mutual understanding of benefit based primarily around increased publicity and attendant possibilities for increased attendance (for MIF) or revenue (for MIF and its funders), with these mutually beneficial relationships being formed of a number of 'usual suspects' within Manchester's cultural and civic circles.

6.4.2 The Usual Suspects

As well as the networks of political and economic support highlighted above, interviewees from MCC stressed that working with the arts involves knowing the best people for the job, and in Manchester (as presumably in many other cities), this involves a series of 'usual suspects' in terms of cultural production, which are constituted here as networks of the city's cultural and civic elite. In this case, the list includes members of MIF as well as the city's primary cultural organisations such as the Manchester Art Gallery (MAG), Whitworth Art Gallery (WAG), the Royal Exchange Theatre, and members of both MCC and a number of arm's length organisations such as Marketing Manchester who consistently play a key part in conversations and actions around the city's cultural offer and future. In terms of MIF's own relationship with these organisations, despite its current position as highly networked within the cultural scene of the city, this has not always been the case. In fact, the Festival's initial stages were characterised by a perceived lack of engagement or networking with these organisations, going somewhat against the 'brand value of respect' as highlighted above:

> "the only way that he [Alex Poots] and Christine [Cort] felt that they could get such a complicated beast as MIF off the ground and make such an impact in such a short period of time is basically to say bollocks to everybody. And to get on, and do what you want, and be ruthless and be rude and not engage with other organisations and just – unless you need something – and just go for it. So my first encounter with MIF was from the other side. I joined the Royal Exchange following on from what from their point of view was a bitter discussion around their involvement – or lack of involvement – in the Festival" (IV12, MIF Employee)

Yet this initial non-engagement has served, in the eyes of some, to forge stronger relationships between the city's cultural organisations. As an interviewee from a long-standing Mancunian cultural institution explained, "Manchester had settled [pre-MIF] for 'quality mediocre', and we all said well actually, we need to up the ante a bit, and the Festival came along and raised the bar. As a result of that, some organisations have

responded to it, and there are some strong networks. I like that sort of challenge" (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee).

It was noticeable amongst interviewees that when questioned about networks or networking specifically, the process was seen as organic rather than forced, with one MIF employee in particular insisting that in MIF's initial stages, "we were all coming to this wonderful new idea that Peter [Saville] and mainly Alex [Poots] had shaped from the same perspective, so it wasn't like they were forced, you know, it was a very natural thing for us to create a brand like this" (IV10, MIF Employee), adding "I just approach my whole life as an opportunity to meet new, interesting people, and I think that's probably networking, but I would never describe it as that because I just like people, and what they do, and I like ideas, and I like people suggesting ideas, and I like comment, and I like seeing other people share ideas and then make ideas happen, and we do that, we facilitate that all the time" (IV10, MIF Employee).

Yet, despite reluctance to describe such activities as networking per se, experiences whilst in the field over the course of this research suggested that MIF belonged very much to a network of cultural and civic elites, with office parties attended by – for example – high ranking council officials, directors of organisations such as Cornerhouse, MAG and WAG, and Manchester Museum, as well as artists or 'cultural interveners' (IV7's phrase) well known around the city, such as DJ and cultural commentator Dave Haslam or musician Guy Garvey. In turn, Festival employees were often invited to opening events around the city (with invitations extended during my employment at MIF including MAG exhibition openings, cocktail bar launches and a preview of the city's new bowling alley), indicating how MIF is perceived from the outside as an organisation of importance, possessing a level of influence that means other organisations are keen to forge or maintain a relationship with them. MIF staff are positioned here as being holders of a level of cultural capital which gives them access to events and activities commonly attended by those in positions of cultural or political power, strengthening the Festival's position amongst the cultural and civic elite of the city.

6.4.3 Alternative Networks: Beyond the 'art elite'

Despite this view of MIF as forming a part of the city's cultural elite, however, closer involvement with the Festival allowed further insight into a number of more alternative networks that MIF connects with, though these networks and engagements are less

obvious to those outside of the Festival. Both the MIF Volunteers, and those involved with MIF Creative projects such as *The Biospheric Project* form networks closely linked to MIF, and yet with different emphases to the cultural and civic networks outlined above. As one interviewee (who has volunteered for MIF since 2009 and also volunteers with other events around the city) explained "I keep seeing people at Walk the Plank [an outdoor arts event company based in the city] when we're doing the Manchester Day Parade[17] who were stage managers at Great Indoors [MIF09 family event]. So you keep seeing the same people, but you see them in different lights, because of the nature of the jobs" (IV19, MIF Volunteer), and it is both the volunteering programme and MIF13 event *The Biospheric Project* which provide the best examples of non-traditional networks within this cultural event.

When asked whether they saw MIF as part of a wider network, MIF Volunteers sprang to mind to one interviewee in particular, who explained that "There's a lot of people who aren't involved in the Festival on a full time basis but have a real love and an understanding and a passion for the Festival", only adding after this that "in terms of Manchester City Council, of course there's that kind of network there between certainly Alex [Poots], Christine [Cort, MIF's Managing Director since its inception] and then sort of the head guys that run Manchester" (IV1, MIF Employee). So the kind of connection between cultural and civic elites highlighted above was not the first network that came to this individual's mind as the most important. It should perhaps not be surprising that the volunteers are seen by some as one of MIF's key networks; for MIF13 there had been 730 volunteering applications by the 23rd April 2013 (over two months before the start of the Festival), 95% of whom were Greater Manchester residents. Some see this element of the Festival as a chance for "the staff members to represent a bit more of a – not like the 'real' Mancunians, it isn't like us and them at all, but I think it puts an onus on us to then be aware of what actually is going on in Manchester and the underground Manchester as well" (IV11, MIF Employee), as "they're a big part of Manchester as well, so why shouldn't they have a little bit in what we do" (IV11, MIF Employee).

The volunteer programme provides an ongoing alternative network for the Festival, which has grown consistently over the four Festivals thus far, with 294 volunteers in 2007, rising steadily to 448 in 2013 (Figures from Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2007; Manchester International Festival, 2013a). There are also,

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[17] The Manchester Day Parade was started by MCC in response to the popularity of Jeremy Deller's *Procession* at MIF09 (see Table 8 in Chapter 7), and runs annually

however, examples of particular events (primarily MIF Creative events) that may expand MIF's networks, pushing into areas not represented by the 'usual suspects' or cultural elites. These networks of volunteers and individuals and organisations with varied interests serve to show that within the vision of new and innovative work that MIF follows, there is room for different voices and priorities to be articulated

For MIF13, the prime example of this was *The Biospheric Project*, an urban farming project based on sustainable food production in a deprived area of Salford (neighbouring Manchester city centre), hosting a variety of workshops and talks on subjects such as permaculture and the design of food systems. *The Biospheric Project* served to forge different partnerships to other areas of MIF, bringing together various actors, "So you've got the universities, you've got this team of young dynamic researchers, you've got BDP, Siemens, Salix Homes which is the Housing Association, you've got all these different people coming together to make this vision happen" (IV17, MIF Employee), which this interviewee claimed "gives those people who are involved in it a really interesting sense of the landscape of the city" (IV17, MIF Employee). For this interviewee, these new networks and relationships help "subtly change your recognition and your perception of what's happening in the city" (IV17, MIF Employee). An interviewee involved in community activism, whom I spoke to in the run-up to MIF13, agreed that this was a potentially positive way of broadening MIF's connections with the city, but expressed concerns that this extension of the network would not go as far as it could:

> "I know a lot of groups from my day job who are engaged in community food growing and things like that that are really real issues and I think that'll be an excellent thing, to try to engage with it, but actually even accessing that is so limited […] I know people who were trying to get hold of them to talk to them about it, and they never got any replies to emails or anything, there is loads of work going on around sustainable food and stuff in Manchester and it'd just be nice if some of those things could kind of link in" (IV18, Community Worker)

There is, therefore, a level of doubt as to whether the building of non-traditional arts networks within the Festival can be as successful as the cementing of the pre-existing relationships between the cultural and civic elite (the Festival's relative failure to make an impact with events that don't conform to a traditional or high art audience will be discussed in the following chapters). There is not necessarily a great level of power within these networks to shape views of MIF or Manchester in the way that the wider Festival network does, meaning that although the levels of participation involved in

both the MIF Volunteers programme and the MIF Creative programming show a different side to MIF, they may do little to subvert or challenge the perception of MIF as being shaped by, or geared towards, networks of elite interests.

The different networks outlined above can be characterised by different motivations, yet there is overlap to be found where these motivations interact, particularly in the relative common ground of the MIF Offices. For example, observation and casual conversation within the office revealed that members of staff involved with the Volunteering team were particularly keen on the Volunteer HQ remaining in the main offices (which had not been the case in previous years), to try and bring these different networks closer together. A long-standing volunteer told me that "I've always felt there is a bit of 'them and us' in terms of valuing what the volunteer team provide to the Festival, and how actually it wouldn't happen if we weren't there" (IV19, MIF Volunteer), adding that "I think it's got a lot better over the years but I still see it", and it is perhaps the different understandings of the Festival's vision or purpose that perpetuates this despite the improvements made by hosting the volunteers within the main office and minimising the 'them and us' feeling. For the divisions (often spatial) between networks – MIF employees and other arts organisations within their own offices and institutions, MCC in the Town Hall, MIF Volunteers until recently situated within a separate MIF office, and MIF Creative participants spending their time on site specific projects or in community spaces across the city – may mask some of the overlap in the way MIF and its role within Manchester is viewed.

Setting aside arguments of the appropriateness of MIF's 'high culture' reputation (which will be further discussed in Chapter 8), all of these different individuals and networks continue their involvement through a belief that culture and the arts can have a positive effect on the city. Many of the 'usual suspects' as highlighted above may see their focus as economic or artistic benefits, whilst alternative networks may have a slightly different focus centred around community impacts. In short, the different voices within MIF attach to different areas of importance. Yet despite these intersecting interests, certain motivations and views of MIF and the city – such as the view of culture as a way of improving image and therefore drawing inward investment – prove to be dominant, in part due to the systems of power and governance within the city characterised by political stability as outlined below.

6.4.5 Systems of Power and Governance

Behind the development and sustaining of the networks outlined above – particularly the public/private partnerships discussed at the beginning of the chapter – lie systems of power and governance that are perceived to contribute to MIF's continued existence and success, and also cement certain views of the Festival's purpose. This can be divided into two distinct facets: the consistent political landscape in Manchester (encapsulated in one interviewee's comment that "hell will freeze over before Manchester's anything other than red." (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee)), and the shared visions or small worlds that emanate, in part, from this.

As outlined in Chapter 2, Manchester has been controlled by Labour since it became a Metropolitan borough in 1974, and as of the most recent elections (May 2014, at the time of writing), all but one of the city's councillors were Labour (with the remaining councillor being an independent candidate). Numerous interviewees attributed the success of MIF in part to this political landscape, with one suggesting that where culture and cultural events are concerned, "there's no such thing as a quick fix. You've got to have a long-term strategy. And the city's in a good position to take the long-term view because of the political and executive stability at the top of the council." (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee). In particular, belonging to the cultural elite of the city, this interviewee valued the fact that "as somebody who's worked a long time in the sector in the city, I know Richard [Leese, Leader of MCC]. I can ring up and he'll answer the telephone" (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee). Others echoed the value placed upon this stability, suggesting it means that MCC "doesn't plan on a one year basis, it plans on a ten year basis because it assumes that in 10 years time it'll still be about" (IV12, MIF Employee). By way of explaining how this stability has impacted upon Manchester's cultural landscape, one MCC employee tells me that:

> "one of the biggest problems for cities is changing political leadership, and it's underestimated, but if you think about it as you get a new party coming in and you get new leadership they tend to want to make their own mark, do their own thing, and culture really suffers with that, because you can't have any consistency in policy. Manchester's had that consistency both in leadership and the chief executive of the council. Both have understood the regenerative benefit of culture for some time"
> (IV6, MCC Employee)

This understanding of the benefits of culture (which, as I will explain in Chapter 8, are perceived by MCC as being primarily economic) links back to the suggestion above that

MCC's partnership with organisations such as MIF is characterised by a relatively hands-off approach. One interviewee suggested that "if you're going to create an artist-led festival, you can't have your major funder turning round and saying we want approval on everything those artists do. So I think the city is brave enough to stand back and say if we've got the right people, doing the right thing, we'll let them do it" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee). The long-term commitment to MIF that has been afforded by MCC's consistency of leadership helps limit the risks that may come with political change, as "If you haven't got political stability, that's [a long-term strategy] already at risk, because somebody else comes in and they say 'how much money are we spending on this? When we're closing hospitals?' and that's that, it's gone" (IV2, MIF Employee). The political stability in Manchester, as well as consistent leadership at the top of MCC (Sir Richard Leese has been Council Leader since 1996, with Sir Howard Bernstein holding the position of Chief Executive since 1998), is just one of the ways in which the networks discussed above have remained consistent, and displayed shared visions towards the arts and associated understandings of cultural value (or at least shared by those with power). In terms of leadership, one interviewee spoke of Manchester as a "very brave city. Very supportive, very passionate, and very trusting when you're delivering" (IV10, MIF Employee), with the emphasis here very much on the final point regarding delivery, whilst another suggested that:

> "it's back to that bravery thing, that wilfulness; the city is great because if you use the Festival as an example, having recognised that actually they needed, they wanted an international festival, they were brave enough to say well if we get the right people, with the right ideas in place, we will then cut them loose enough that they can create the right festival for Manchester." (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee)

A system of patronage is thus set up in which MIF has enough autonomy to stress an 'art for art's sake' argument whilst a bottom line to deliver – in part through economic success – remains, revealing a hierarchy of purpose in which MIF is ultimately accountable to MCC. There is a sense here however that there is enough of a shared idea of desired outcomes between MCC, arms length agencies such as Marketing Manchester, and MIF, for relationships of trust to be formed and maintained. In part, this comes down to the compact nature of the city centre, primarily in terms of the social circles that play out around events and institutions such as MIF rather than in terms of its geography or population. As one interviewee expressed:

"it's the second city[18], but it's still quite a small town, everybody knows each other, you know in a big circle, the people who run the businesses, they all know each other, and actually the [IRA] bomb really meant that people pulled together, so it's a mixture of the Commonwealth Games, and then the bomb, you know, all these people pull together, just that civic pride thing." (IV4, MIF Employee)

So civic pride and the city's historical trajectory, particularly recent events such as the IRA bomb or the Commonwealth Games appear to form a shared understanding of the city, out of which comes Original Modern and MIF itself. It is clear, however, that the systems of power and governance that articulate and sustain these themes and traits, whilst enabling the continuing funding of culture and the arts within the city, privilege the priorities or views of certain networks whilst perhaps sidelining other interpretations. Thus the dominant narrative of MIF is formed by those with a particular view of the city, as is discussed further below.

6.5 Understandings of Manchester from within the networks

It seems apparent that those within these networks of cultural and civic elites have shared visions of the city, linking back to the carefully chosen historical traits discussed previously. This is summarised in a widely attributed – though difficult to source – Tony Wilson quote that 'we do things differently' in Manchester, and it is this 'self belief' that contributes both to MIF's success and its position as continuing a very particular narrative of the city, in which those with the power to name dictate dominant understandings of the city through culture. In examining these dominant understandings, we can question what MIF means as a part of this narrative, and whether the belief in the importance or impact of the Festival relates to a deeper connection with this imagined understanding of Manchester as a 'can do' city. Shared understandings of the 'can do' city and themes of ambition are discussed below, followed by a summarisation of some of the tensions evident around how MIF exemplifies Manchester.

6.5.1 The 'can do' city: 'This is Manchester. We do things differently here'

Running through the positioning of MIF as part of an esteemed history of the city, and the belief in culture and the arts that has been displayed above by a number of interviewees is a level of belief, both self-belief and belief in the city as a whole, exemplified by some as 'doing things differently' and a 'can-do attitude':

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[18] In terms of population, Manchester is not, in fact, the UK's second city (it's Birmingham), yet there is an assumption on behalf of many Manchester residents that, at least culturally, it holds this accolade

"as Tony Wilson said, 'we do things differently', well I don't know if we do or we don't, but it just feels right. Because I think on the whole the people of Manchester will smell everybody out negatively if you are being trite or contrived. I think that's why things happen like that round here. You have to try harder. You do try, but you still get tested." (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee)

Other interviewees suggest that "there is that attitude, there is that 'can do' attitude, maybe there is that little rivalry that kind of drives everything" (IV1, MIF Employee), and also equate this attitude to Manchester's seeming ability to attract and maintain an incoming population:

"It's a real city which welcomes people, other people come, they come here, they love it, and then they really take it on as their city, and they drive it forward, and they stay because it's got this – I hate this phrase, at MIDAS[19] we always had to describe it as in Manchester people have got this 'can do' attitude" (IV4, MIF Employee)

This MIF Employee in particular, but a number of others as well, expressed some discomfort in describing Manchester as 'can-do', and yet it is a pervasive attitude and one that is seemingly embraced by the city's cultural and civic elite as another facet of the myth-making, or the attempt to build and sustain a city identity, behind the conceptualisation of the contemporary city. There appears to be a greater level of comfort, however, associated with summarising the city as 'ambitious': a description with similar connotations to the idea of the 'can-do' city yet perhaps seen as a less clichéd form of expression. Interviewees suggested that MIF positions Manchester as "a very ambitious city, […] interested in new collaborations, pushing boundaries, trying to take a risk and make something really extraordinary happen" (IV17, MIF Employee), and that the reason the format of MIF was pioneered in Manchester rather than another city "is because of the city's great ambition really, the city is just incredibly forward thinking and punches above its weight" (IV4, MIF Employee).

In terms of viewing the Festival in particular as some form of manifestation of the city, interviewees expressed a belief that MIF is testament to Manchester's individuality or independence, for example stating that when the Festival was in its initial development phase "we didn't look at other brands in a similar field [because] The water can get so muddied looking what everybody else is doing" (IV10, MIF Employee); as well as

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[19] MIDAS is Manchester's inward investment agency. More details can be found at http://www.investinmanchester.com/

suggesting that MIF helps to position Manchester on a world stage (in other words, asserting independence but still wishing to be compared favourably to other cities):

> "I think in terms of what that says about the Festival is that we're aiming to deliver really world-class experiences and artistic product that takes its place internationally, amongst some of the best artistic work internationally, that gives us a standing within international partners, and achieves a sort of level of quality and innovation, that is sort of second to none on the international and national stage really." (IV17, MIF Employee)

There is an evident tension, however, between the desire to promote international recognition of Manchester, and the desire to use MIF as an exemplar of the city itself. This tension was drawn out by one of the MIF Volunteers, who explains that "we work with people from everywhere, there's a lot of talent here. And it's funny to say that because it's an international festival so a lot of the artists are not from round here, but you know, a lot of the people involved are, and it's somewhere that people want to come to" (IV19, MIF Volunteer) (these tensions will be further explored in Chapter 8, where the different outcomes of the Festival are analysed).

Weaving throughout these processes of exemplifying something about the essence of the city through MIF and Original Modern is a level of belief that both the Festival and the city more widely are important, or are believed to be by those members of the elite. This belief in the importance of the city and its cultural outputs, whether through artists such as IV16 who sees themself "as somebody who takes Manchester around the world just by my nature, as a brand" (IV16, MIF Artist) and thus was attracted to involvement with MIF, or through the suggestion made by IV1 that "There's always this constant comparison between London and Manchester, and that somehow Manchester's been the younger brother when actually, if you look at where things have happened first, it has tended to be Manchester" (IV1, MIF Employee), the work of MIF and Original Modern plays a role in forming visions of Manchester that reposition the city for the 21st Century, as shall be discussed below.

6.6 Forming Visions of the City

"in order for the world to have a way to see Manchester in the 21st Century, Manchester needed a way to see itself. So I felt that this perception point was inward as much as it was outward." (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

Essentially, visions of Manchester are produced through MIF by virtue of the partnership working and shared goals that were referenced by many of my interviewees, with these visions then showcasing the kinds of cultural outputs that are deemed valuable by those with levels of power and capital. Thinking back to the shared visions of the city outlined above, it is clear that MIF has been designed not simply to reflect what are believed to be 'traits' of the city, but to project these in a way that repositions Manchester in the minds of a series of wider publics (in different contexts and at different scales), away from connotations of decline of industry and towards ideas of rebirth: the birth of the post-industrial city that may be able to incorporate what have been conceived of as positive elements of the city during the successful era of its industrial past, as well as engendering new positives such as culture, which did not play a key role in much of the past landscape. In summing this up, an MIF Board Member claimed that "I firmly believe that cultural events can alter perceptions of cities, and in many ways the Manchester International Festival was conceived to do exactly that" (IV5, MIF Board Member).

It is apparent that the motivations and interactions of certain networks form this city vision, that an urban elite have had control over what kind of vision of the city is presented to the wider world, and what culture is valued within this. The brand identity of Manchester is thus played out through high art and its consumption, with MIF forming the centrepiece of this. Original Modern pertains to be about the 'real' city, embodying long-standing traits exemplified by Mancunian endeavours, yet – as shall be explored further in Chapter 8 – the kind of city symbolised by Original Modern may remain inaccessible to many. This chapter has therefore been about the representations of the city as envisaged by cultural and civic elites, but has also introduced some of the alternative networks, suggesting that groups such as the MIF Volunteers may represent a different view of the Festival and the city.

In the discussion above, it has become apparent that MIF has been positioned by the cultural and civic elites of Manchester as part of a carefully articulated historical trajectory as encapsulated through the ethos of Original Modern. In this positioning, particular traits of an urban identity are emphasised, intending to portray the city as original, competitive, forward-thinking, and although there is evidence of alternative networks within MIF such as the MIF Volunteering programme and MIF Creative, these networks have seemingly little impact on the visions of the city that are formed through the Festival. In the following chapter, consideration turns to the practices of

production of these visions: the micro-processes that are involved in MIF, and the ways in which these are connected both to the identity traits discussed above and the desire to alter perceptions of the city.

7 Discourses of Cultural Value as Articulated through MIF's Practices and Micro-processes

Moving from the representations discussed in the previous chapter, here the specific practices involved in the creation and perpetuation of these representations within MIF will be explored. This entails a close reading of MIF's micro-processes that has been afforded by the length of time embedded within the field as well as the position of trust gained through employment at MIF. From the question of how MIF is viewed by those within its networks that was addressed in the previous chapter, here we explore the different ways in which a range of individuals want the Festival's image to be portrayed through its everyday office work and specific events, and the tensions that interviewees see in these representations of events, which display a recurrence of a number of issues. Are local or international audiences of greater importance? Can high art, local 'maverick' scenes and popular works be adequately represented within MIF? And which of these is most significant? Despite these questions – those of conflicting desires and contrasting audiences – the discussion below suggests an almost innate feeling that MIF is some kind of force for good within the city, with interviewees seeing MIF as positive without necessarily being able to articulate why.

The discussion that follows is thus positioned within a frame of discourses of cultural value and the tensions inherent within the questions that arise from this, using ethnographic material along with information gleaned from interviews and some examples of printed materials to explore the landscape articulated in the previous chapter by tightening the focus to examine how these discourses are played out in practice. The chapter begins by considering the Festival's desire to present 'urgent stories of our time' and new takes on old ideas, connecting with the Original Modern ethos examined in the previous chapter and incorporating some of the printed materials released around MIF13 to connect these with the lived experience of time spent in the Festival offices. Following on from this, specific MIF events are examined in order to assess whether an Original Modern image such as that explored in Chapter 6 is manifest within these events, intensifying the tensions identified between different goals as expressed through different events.

What is apparent is that a number of interviewees wish to present an image that is in keeping with Original Modern through the lived experience of their day to day work. Reflections are then posed on how the lived experience of the practices of MIF (including a number of personal experiences as a researcher) embody particular traits,

aligning with a desire on the part of the Festival organisers to be viewed in a particular way, commensurate with a number of goals such as the desire to be perceived as a world-leading arts festival. Finally, the tensions that arise from this are further explored, highlighting a level of confusion about who MIF exists for, a question that is considered in detail in the following chapter. This enables further consideration of this 'Original Modern' festival and its connections with a variety of communities of interest, adding to the previous chapter with a depth of lived experience that helps to add detail and nuance to questions of culture, regeneration and urban branding, thus contributing to an area of research which has not often benefitted from this ethnographic investigation.

7.1 Tackling Stories: The urgent and the new

Later in this chapter, examples will be given that illustrate how employees, volunteers and events are all expected, to an extent, to live and breathe the embodiment – or a chosen embodiment – of the Festival, that of being part of something beyond the everyday, something reflected within the Festival's events and even within everyday micro-processes. This is a kind of shared culture within which a particular vision of MIF and Manchester is in a constant process of reiteration through the practices of the Festival and its employees. What will be seen in the examples that follow is a sense that there is a strong desire for the Festival to appear as Original Modern, as fitting in with this brand ethos that tries to position the city as unique. Before considering these events and micro-processes in further detail, we shall examine two ways in which the Festival's events and practices reflect this adherence to the ethos of Original Modern: through the telling of 'urgent stories of our time', and through a focus on the new, both of which can be seen as attempts to position Manchester as forward-thinking and continuously relevant. These can be seen through a number of practices (and personal experiences) of the Festival, though in order to further draw out the impact of such a focus, some of the documentation surrounding MIF13 is also analysed.

7.1.1 Urgent Stories of Our Time

One of MIF's taglines is '18 Extraordinary Days' (see Figure 9), and this idea of being beyond the ordinary formed part of the role we as employees and volunteers played within the Festival. This became particularly evident during the course of 2013's Festival, when on the 4th July 2013, day one of MIF13, I received a slightly panicked phone call from a colleague, who was at the bank arranging for floats of small change to be taken to venues around the city (to sell programmes and the like). They had underestimated quite how much the change would weigh, so could I find some sacks and bring them to

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the bank ASAP? The phrase that greeted me on my (breathless) arrival at the bank some minutes later: "Are you feeling extraordinary yet?" – a throwaway remark, and yet one that resonated with an overarching sense of what MIF appeared to be about.

Figure 9: '18 Extraordinary Days'; Manchester Evening News cover, 7th June 2013

For all the mundanity of much of the work that went on behind closed doors, we were to remember at all times that this was supposedly extraordinary, that we were part of something significant for the city. One way in which the everyday activities of MIF are positioned as something extraordinary and significant is through the theme of 'urgent stories of our time'. First set out at the Festival's inception in 2007[20], and linked to the series of 'Festival Futures' talks at MIF07 (which covered topics such as the future of the body, of journalism, of the planet), successive Festival programmes remark on this theme as being of continuing importance, with MIF Creative projects such as *Vertical Farm* (MIF11) being most strongly associated with this (the programme entry for this project claims that *Vertical Farm* is "part of our long-term commitment to urgent stories of our time" (Manchester International Festival, 2011b: 41), a sentiment which is then reiterated in *The Biospheric Project*'s MIF13 programme which claims "the issue of food production has become one of the most urgent stories of our time" (Manchester International Festival, 2013c: 1).

As one interviewee commented, "the Festival is prepared to tackle things like urgent stories of our time, like we did with contemporary slavery back in 2007[21], and then the

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[20] "To focus on the urgent stories of our time" is one of the objectives situated within the aim "To create an international, ambitious and extraordinary festival, dedicated to commissioning new work from across the spectrum of creativity and human endeavor" (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2007: 8)

[21] The *Slavery in our Time Symposium*, which introduced art which took contemporary slavery as its focus as a part of MIF07

Manchester Report in 2009" (IV17, MIF Employee). A council employee also wanted to stress the significance of this to me, linking this theme with a longer historical trajectory within the city:

> "you know the bits of [the Festival] that Alex [Poots] talks about in terms of looking at things from a different perspective: urgent stories of our time and I'm sure you've probably heard him use that language. We've got a history in Manchester of supporting parts of society that wouldn't normally have a very strong voice, so whether that's through the Suffragette movement, Peterloo massacre, Trade Union movement, […] if those were the urgent stories of the industrial revolution, what are the urgent stories of today? What is it that we need to address?" (IV6, MCC Employee)

What appears significant here, more than the link between MIF and Manchester's history of radicalism (which was discussed in Chapter 6), is the idea of 'urgent stories of our time' forming a practised use of language: This interviewee says that "you've probably heard him use that language", and indeed, there were a number of occasions that Alex Poots used either this specific phrase or the assertion that MIF13 was a festival 'for our time' in my time at MIF, such as during programme overviews given to staff in both July 2012 and February 2013 where Poots referred to MIF13 as being "appropriate for our times" (Field Diary, 27/07/12). It should be noted here that MIF13 has formed a shift from the more grandiose language of 'urgent stories', to a focus on appropriateness, with an associated feeling that ongoing austerity should force a level of humility on a festival such as MIF. Much like the repetition of '18 extraordinary days', the ongoing use of these phrases tries to cement them as significant in the minds of those who hear them (employees particularly, but also volunteers and potentially the general public).

7.1.2 Focusing on the New

The connection between past and future incarnations of the city suggested by Original Modern is reflected not only through these 'urgent stories of our time', but also within the theme of new takes on old ideas that is embodied within the Festival's events and practices. An artist involved in MIF in the past suggested that through what they have chosen to commission, MIF is "protecting heritage of different areas of culture but it's pushing boundaries as well. It's always about the new" (IV16, MIF Artist), elaborating upon this by explaining that "some festivals are celebrating something that's been celebrated a hundred times before, and that's good still, it's art for art's sake, but I like the fact that the more innovative new artists are put on through MIF" (IV16, MIF

Artist). This is a claim that many festivals are likely to make, yet it continues to be unusual for a festival to commission new work for 100 percent of its output. Numerous interviewees expressed similar feelings, suggesting that MIF is "not just about looking back, it's that you are creating your world, you're creating the future" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee), with one in particular suggesting that the nature of these events marks MIF, and Manchester more broadly, out from other cities:

> "The promise I think for the Festival of Manchester is that it's cutting edge, it's contemporary, it's critically acclaimed, it's unique, it's different, it's imaginative, it is at the forefront, it's looking to the future, not to the back, and it's got an ambition to be world class. And almost every town and village and city now wants its own arts festival, and too many of them are taken to the lowest common denominator of stuff that's mediocre - or good - but that's been heard before. So there's something quite unique about Manchester International Festival, all commissioning, all new and all different, and it's talking about the Original Modern city" (IV5, MIF Board Member)

Certainly, there are no other UK festivals that focus solely on newly commissioned material, so MIF therefore stands out from the crowd of urban festivals in this respect. Yet it may still be a leap to suggest that new commissions automatically equate to being Original Modern. One way in which some believed MIF stood apart from its counterparts was in the way that new uses of old venues during MIF13 connected the Festival specifically with the city, with one interviewee suggesting that "it sort of gives that sense of continuity to go back into those old spaces [such as Albert Hall[22] and St Peters Church[23]], […] a city building on its past to continue moving forward" (IV9, MCC Employee), and another believing that "doing things in venues that are found spaces where you wouldn't normally expect art to be, crossing over of audiences and so on; I think it's part of the Festival's success, because it's very associated with Manchester" (IV6, MCC Employee), despite there being evidence of post-industrial re-use and redevelopment of buildings for artistic and cultural uses in cities across the world.

Much as with the assertion above that MIF talks about the Original Modern city, this idea that using unusual venues is somehow specifically associated with Manchester is

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[22] The Albert Hall is a Grade II listed Wesleyan chapel in Manchester city centre, which lay unused for over 40 years before local venue owners Trof redeveloped it as an events venue. Its use during MIF13 preceded a full opening in Spring 2014.
[23] St Peter's Church (now known as Hallé St Peter's) in Ancoats is a Grade II listed deconsecrated church constructed in 1859. Since being taken on by the Hallé orchestra as a rehearsal space it has also been used for MIF13 events and subsequently other events including weddings.

difficult to sustain: it is almost as though by positioning itself as unique and of the city, and by acting this out through the everyday workings of the Festival, it is made true, at least in the minds of those involved with the processes of MIF (though it should also be added that there may be a level of bias here in terms of interviewees being aware of the focus of this research, and thus trying to form links between MIF and a Manchester identity that they may not have done outside of this study).

Some research participants drew parallels between the work of the Festival and the city's past exercises in philanthropy, with one MIF Artist suggesting that the process of challenging audiences that MIF engages in means that "You feel richer for it. It's like you know, you walk around Mrs Rylands' Library – it should be called[24] – and you see the work that went into the architecture there, and for it to be the first public building, the first public library of its kind, that kind of spirit" (IV16, MIF Artist). There is a feeling here that these new takes on old ideas, these 'firsts' not only tie in with the city's history but offer some kind of enriching experience to the public, and that this "gives the city a sense of ownership over these amazing productions", that (somewhat patronisingly) "look at these amazing artists coming to our little city, to do their thing, to do their firsts, and to grow as artists a little bit in our city. That's really uplifting" (IV16, MIF Artist). What is less clear, however, is whether these parallels are likely to be made by those who are not as intensely connected to Manchester's cultural development, or as interested in its history. The narrative sought through MIF and Original Modern more widely is most likely to be appreciated by those who already perceive these kinds of connection as part of a kind of urban identity of Manchester.

It is clear that through both 'urgent stories of our time', and 'new takes on old ideas', MIF is attempting to position itself as important and attuned to the city of Manchester, and in the discussion that follows, a similar pattern will be seen in the way that particular events and specific micro-processes within the office lend weight to this idea of MIF as both unique and significant. The comments from of IV16 and IV5 show a level of belief in the Festival's importance to the city, and the connection with philanthropic traditions identified by IV16 suggests a belief that MIF automatically provides some kind of benefits 'to the people' of Manchester. Given that these comments are coming from individuals with a position of privilege and years of accumulated cultural capital acquired through direct involvement with the cultural scene of the city, one could suggest that

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[24] The John Rylands Library on Deansgate was commissioned by Enriquetta Rylands in memory of her late husband in 1890. The Neo-Gothic structure took nine years to build at a cost of £230,000 (Hartwell, 2001: 96), equating to in excess of £20 million in 2015.

MIF's practices and programming connect primarily to Floridian ideas of the Creative Class, attracting and retaining creative individuals to the city (less than half of the interviewees within this research originally came from Manchester). Related questions around who MIF is for, and how these themes of the urgent and the new are played out within the Festival's events and micro-processes, are discussed below.

7.2 Articulations through MIF Commissions

In Chapter 6, consideration was given to the way in which festivals and cultural events such as MIF can help to form visions of the city. Here, this idea is developed further through a more in-depth observation of some of MIF's individual commissions, and the feelings that these evoke within interviewees from within and without the Festival. Whilst we shall see that the everyday practices of the MIF offices position the Festival in terms of its brand and message, as a biennial series of (often high-profile) commissions, it is the individual events themselves that present an impression of MIF and Manchester to a wider public, whether as audience members or as individuals who see or hear about the existence of these. When asked about the Festival's events over the years, and whether any spring to mind as being particularly key or specifically representative of the city, interviewees spoke of a number of different examples, from the community engagement of Jeremy Deller's *Procession* (MIF09), to the potential lasting impact of *The Biospheric Project* (MIF13), the 'Manchester moment' of Elbow's performance with the Hallé Orchestra (MIF09), the boundary-stretching art of Marina Abramovic (MIF07, MIF09, MIF11) (see Table 8 for further descriptions of all events discussed within this chapter – a full list of events is detailed in Appendix 3).

Little consensus emerged as to which events had been most significant, but all gave detailed, considered reasoning. The discussion below charts some of these responses, considering community engagement, Manchester-centric themes, and 'groundbreaking' art, as these themes emerged as consistently important to the interviewees questioned, and were the reasons behind their choices. Whilst further exploration of what MIF stands for will be carried out in Chapter 8, these discussions are intended to examine the kind of issues MIF's events tackle, whether they articulate the same kind of identity as that outlined in the discussion of Original Modern in Chapter 6 (which will then be related to micro-processes of the day-to-day life of MIF considered later in this chapter). Whilst the full spectrum of MIF events across the four festivals between 2007 and 2013 show a broader range of art forms than those referred to here, the events as elaborated

upon by interviewees display a relatively representative range of MIF's offering, with art, music and theatre all represented as well as a range of free and paid for events.

Table 8: MIF Event Descriptions

Event	Year	Description
Procession	MIF09	A contemporary take on a traditional procession curated by Jeremy Deller, with 25,000 people watching this parade of floats inspired by Manchester's past and present (MIF Creative Commission)
Vertical Farm	MIF11	A project exploring the feasibility of creating a 'vertical farm' in a tower block in the Manchester suburb of Wythenshawe, aiming to tackle issues of food poverty (MIF Creative Commission)
The Biospheric Project	MIF13	The continuation of Vertical Farm, this comprised an urban farm set up in a disused printworks in Salford, complete with free talks and workshops for the public (MIF Creative Commission)
Elbow and the Hallé Orchestra	MIF09	Mercury Music Prize winners Elbow teamed up with the Hallé Orchestra and composer Joe Duddell for two performances at the Bridgewater Hall and a free live link up to audiences in Castlefield
Marina Abramovic Presents	MIF09	Abramovic curated a number of long-durational art works at the Whitworth Art Gallery, which audiences would view over a number of hours
11 Rooms	MIF11	A group art show in Manchester Art Gallery, with 11 artists each given an identical white room to curate, with a focus on 'live' and interactive art
The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic	MIF11	A combination of theatre, opera and art, centred around the life of Marina Abramovic (written by and starring Abramovic)
That Day We Sang	MIF11	Victoria Wood's musical centred around the true story of a children's choir in 1920s Manchester, featuring a choir made up of local schoolchildren (MIF Creative commission)
The Masque of Anarchy	MIF13	Maxine Peake's performance of Percy Bysshe Shelley's The Masque of Anarchy, a poem based around the Peterloo Massacre which took place in Manchester in 1819
Macbeth	MIF13	Starring Kenneth Branagh as Macbeth, and taking place in a deconsecrated church complete with mud, rain and fire.
Sacred Sites	MIF11	Five performances by five different musicians in five different places of worship of different faiths (MIF Creative commission)
Sacred Sounds	MIF13	A choir made up from women from Manchester of all faith communities, who performed with both John Tavener and Abida Parveen at MIF13

7.2.1 Community Focus

Within the questions around who MIF is for that have run through this examination of the Festival, the theme of a community focus is one that was raised by a number of interviewees. Whilst there was a level of agreement that this was not the Festival's primary focus, a number of comments were made as to the importance of commissioning some events that 'spoke' to local communities, though tensions were noted as a part of these events. Within MIF, these tensions are likely to be most evident within MIF Creative projects due to their community-facing nature. MIF Creative is introduced in the MIF09 programme as "Building on foundations laid down in 2007, the Festival's commitment to the local community takes a giant leap forward with the launch of MIF Creative, a major community engagement programme that aims to light a creative fire in Mancunians of all ages and backgrounds" (Manchester International Festival, 2009: 34).

First and foremost among the events mentioned which combined creativity and community impact was Jeremy Deller's *Procession*, a free event based on traditional processions and carnivals, held at MIF09 that was seen as extending the Festival's reach and visibility within the city and subtly shifting its identity in the minds of those both within and without the Festival (see Table 8 for further detail). Speaking of *Procession* in the Festival programme, creator Deller writes "I love processions – as humans, it's almost part of our DNA to be instinctively attracted to big public events that bring us together" (Manchester International Festival, 2009: 18). It was this event – one of the first to be commissioned by MIF Creative – that brought together a wider spread of the Manchester community, both in terms of those involved in the production and those who witnessed it on the streets. As quoted in the MIF09 evaluation, *Procession* "involved some 1700 people drawn from 86 different community groups from across all 10 Greater Manchester authorities" (Manchester International Festival, 2010: 10), with around 25,000 people watching the event on the day.

Speaking of *Procession*, one interviewee explained that "the piece that you see is very much about the character of the city, and about putting across different characters of the city, and really interesting little quirks of the city and people in the city" (IV17, MIF Employee), with another speaking similarly highly of it, saying "I must admit that first parade made me cry, […] it felt like it was done […] kind of compassionately, I feel like as an artist he [Deller] doesn't sneer at people" (IV18, Community Worker). This latter interviewee went on to contrast *Procession* with the Manchester Day Parade, a MCC-run

annual parade that has been held since *Procession* was hosted in 2009. In her opinion, the Day Parade "felt like the council were having kind of pale echoes of this really amazing art thing, and it kind of shows to me how they don't understand art properly" (IV18, Community Worker). This displays a distinct awareness of the tensions that can exist between the primary objectives of art and community engagement, whereby a successful example of this is emulated within a specific framing of tourism and branding and is found lacking as a result. The Day Parade was seen here as a 'pale echo' of *Procession* due to the lack of connection seen between the floats presented and understandings of the city, whereas *Procession* was specifically intended to represent facets of the city with traditions such as the flower girls of Bury alongside contemporary communities of interest like the emo and goth kids who spend their Saturdays on the green by the Cathedral (see Figure 10), with Deller expressing the importance of inclusion of such communities in a publication accompanying the event:

> "Since the war, in most towns and cities there have been places where young people, no longer children but too young to go to pubs, hang out. In Manchester it is Cathedral Gardens, a space where you can fall in love, form a band and occasionally throw up. There is something elemental in the ebb and flow of youth here on a Saturday" (Deller, 2010: 36)

Outside of key examples such as *Procession,* there have been a number of other opportunities for MIF to seek to link art and community engagement, by embarking on projects potentially unusual for an arts festival. As one interviewee made clear; "one of the things that Alex had always said right at the beginning of the Festival was that he wanted it to be about creating really world class artistic product, but he wanted it to be about recognising that there are leading minds and thinkers and artists from across the full spectrum of creativity" (IV17, MIF Employee), citing MIF13's *The Biospheric Project* as an example of this (see Table 8 for further detail).

Figure 10: 'Cathedral Gardens, Saturday Afternoon, Rain or Shine' (Deller, 2010. Image courtesy of MIF)

A number of other interviewees also expressed a belief that this project could show a different side to the Festival, and create 'legacy' – a process that was brought to the forefront of the minds of cultural and sporting bodies in the wake of the London 2012 Olympics. One said that "you know you can say 'I saw Macbeth in a church, that's pretty cool' but actually look, what is the lasting thing that's going to put Manchester on the map is things like *The Biospheric Project*" (IV11, MIF Employee), with the inference being that the different and lasting nature of *The Biospheric Project* (which is intended to run for a minimum of 10 years) may have more impact on Manchester's national or international reputation than some of the more traditional shows (with MIF13's *Macbeth* starring Kenneth Branagh cited as an example here). Despite questions of how to measure value, the decision on the part of MIF's directors to include *The Biospheric Project* in the initial MIF13 announcements in Autumn 2012 (along with *Macbeth* starring Kenneth Branagh and *The xx* in residence) suggests that there is a desire to place an unusual and seemingly more community-focused project on a par with both popular music and innovative stagings of Shakespeare, and perhaps thus a desire to shift the image of MIF in the eyes of the public:

"in our minds, you know, even if you pick Kenneth Branagh as the one you want to run with as your front page, actually we see them all on a level playing field. And [it] carries equal importance. I'll be very interested to see how things develop, […] I probably shouldn't really be saying this - but [*The xx* or *Macbeth*] feels like an easy sell, you know to a cultural audience it's an easy sell, whereas actually we're almost appealing to a cultural audience but a far wider audience with something like *The Biospheric Project*" (IV1, MIF Employee)

The work of MIF Creative expresses a growing desire on the part of MIF's organisers to be viewed as open, with events such as *Procession* and much of *The Biospheric Project* being free, and the former drawing large crowds, but also an ongoing push to be seen as innovative or groundbreaking, with the inclusion of a social and environmental project such as *The Biospheric Project* serving to enhance MIF's credentials as pursuing originality. MIF Creative projects such as *Procession* and *The Biospheric Project* offer the potential to articulate the alternative side to the Festival, as MIF Creative "has those MIF brand values at heart but it shows something different, it shows the character of the city in a way that perhaps some of the other commissions don't" (IV17, MIF Employee). The values being spoken of here are those of originality and artistic integrity, and it is this commitment that means "You have to have an artist who's genuinely committed to the community being involved in the project and who understands that that might mean that at times, it might make it more difficult" (IV17, MIF Employee).

It is perhaps this difficulty that means MIF Creative projects are sometimes not the limelight-grabbing commissions of the Festival, and hence why the dominant public understanding of MIF seems to be one equated with high art rather than community relevance, certainly at its inception, as evidenced in MIF evaluations. For example, MIF07 audiences were made up of 78% ABC1 – or upper middle, middle and lower middle class (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2007: 55). Comments included in the evaluation of MIF11 included the suggestion that the Festival was "A bit highbrow - felt that it had reverted to being a touch more inaccessible, looking to impress arts professionals rather than the majority of the population" (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2011: 28). Furthermore, there is a need for greater unpacking of understandings of 'the community' constructed by both MIF and the artists who become involved in MIF Creative; comments such as that of IV17 above suggest that whilst there is commitment to this more engaged, collaborative work, there are many questions to be asked around *whose* communities are involved in the process (questions that shall be considered further in the following chapter).

7.2.2 Being 'of Manchester'

Whilst there are a number of questions or uncertainties around the ways in which MIF events may display a community focus, there is a stronger sense that a number of events are deemed to be somehow 'of Manchester', through their connection with the city's history and its people. It is often the case that the MIF Creative projects such as those commented on above may be more closely linked to somehow being 'of' Manchester, whether through celebrating the city in *Procession*, bringing local faith groups together through *Sacred Sites* (MIF11) or *Sacred Sounds* (MIF13), or telling a particularly northern story through *That Day We Sang* (MIF11) (refer to Table 8 for descriptions of these events). In terms of specifically representing the city of Manchester through events, however, MIF13 contained one particular example, that of *The Masque of Anarchy*, where Maxine Peake gave a performance of this poem charting a significant moment in Manchester's history. Whilst this gave a level of connection between the Festival and the city, it was not without its issues, as one interviewee expressed:

> "the only thing that seemed particularly Manchester-centric was *The Masque of Anarchy*[25], which is clearly really important, but for fuck's sake – forgive my language – the Peterloo Memorial campaign have been trying really hard to get a proper memorial, and the council have – and I know this group really well so this isn't just hearsay – just messing around for so many years about a memorial, and I know it's not as simple as the money – but for a tiny drop of one of those productions, actually, we'd have got the memorial that Peterloo deserves. And it just kinda reminds me again of that weird disjointed thinking because that'd be something that was permanent, that would, touch a lot of people and actually maybe would be a lasting thing people would come to." (IV18, Community Worker)

The issues around the ongoing Peterloo memorial campaign did not appear evident during my time at MIF, with the Festival instead using the event to position MIF13 as being more 'of Manchester', part of the goal to be seen to deliver a Festival 'appropriate for our times' of ongoing austerity (an effort that shall be considered further within a study of the Festival's micro-processes within the office setting), the transience of this event compared to a permanent memorial not being specifically considered. The casting of Salford-born actress Maxine Peake to deliver Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem *The Masque of Anarchy* was clearly designed to maximise the Manchester-centric message of the piece, with Peake herself claiming that "we feel this piece is very important, because it's about

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[25] This event comprised a recital of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Masque of Anarchy* (1990. Original published in 1819): a 91-verse poem inspired by and written in the aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre of the same year, where 60,000 people gathered in Manchester to campaign for parliamentary reform, and 18 were killed and over 700 injured by armed cavalry

Manchester's past and, you know, is protest still powerful" (Manchester International Festival, 2013d), and that she believes "Peterloo to be one of the most important and pivotal events in Manchester's long radical history" (The Guardian, 2013).

There is clearly a sense here of the local relevance of this performance, and also evidence of an engagement with Manchester's past, but a production such as *The Masque of Anarchy*, whilst relevant to the city in terms of its history (at the time of the production, it was 194 years since the Peterloo Massacre that inspired the poem), does not necessarily then foster a contemporary sense of personal or emotional engagement between audience, Festival and city. My time spent at MIF suggested that many of those directly involved with MIF feel the Festival excels at this, with comments such as those of IV19, who was keen to counteract any claims that the Festival isn't 'for' the benefit of the people of Manchester by stating "it is for them" cementing a feeling that MIF is of relevance to Manchester, but interviewees only identified one particular event as being 'of Manchester' in the sense that it felt as though it reached a broad spectrum of the city's population. This was *Elbow and the Hallé* for MIF09, where the Mercury Prize-winning band teamed up with Manchester's 150 year old orchestra, which one interviewee referred to by saying that "if I think of success in terms of local impact on Manchester and the sort of buzz in the city then I'd probably say Elbow at the Bridgewater Hall, and the relay there [a free to attend live relay screened in nearby Castlefield], that felt like a really significant event, […] really well timed" (IV3, MIF Employee), and another explaining that this particular event signified, to him, a 'Manchester moment':

> "I think absolutely there are elements, every iteration of MIF, that people love because of their Manchester-ness. Elbow and the Halle felt very much like a Manchester moment, even more out in Castlefield[26], almost more than it did in the concert hall, you know the fact that there were 3,000 people or whatever it was on a summer's evening, in Castlefield who got to take part in that, and then Elbow all went through during the interval and spent time on the stage, you know, in a way you know, there will have been people who walked away saying that's *my* Festival and that's *my* city and you know, we do it a bit differently here." (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee)

The language used here is specifically intended to assert Manchester's position as somehow unique through the events it presents, returning to the phrasing of "we do it a bit differently" that was commented upon in the previous chapter, showing a desire to

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[26] The concert, which took place in the Bridgewater Hall, was live streamed to an outdoor amphitheatre in Castlefield, just outside Manchester city centre. Tickets were limited but were free.

assert a position of standing out from the crowd and prove a level of distinction not only for the Festival but for the wider city. In the context of positioning MIF through its events, *Elbow and the Hallé* enabled a greater claim to local relevance and popular culture than the vast majority of MIF commissions, following the Original Modern value of inclusion discussed in the previous chapter whilst still adhering to high artistic standards by including a world-class orchestra in proceedings. Considering the spread of events across the four Festivals thus far, however, it is the commissions more associated with high art that appear to be emblematic of MIF's ethos, and desire to cement its position on a world stage.

7.2.3 MIF and 'High Art'

Whilst these different events brought up by interviewees display a number of different readings of how the MIF 'brand' is articulated through its events, there is one ongoing collaboration that seems, more than the others, to signify what MIF's position is both within the city and on an international stage. It is not a community collaboration, or a part of popular culture, but a number of events more closely linked with traditional high art themes. Since MIF09, the Festival has collaborated on numerous occasions with Marina Abramovic, a renowned Serbian American performance artist. MIF09 hosted *Marina Abramovic Presents…*, a collaborative show curated by Abramovic, with the *11 Rooms* art installations at MIF11 featuring a room by Abramovic and the same year's Festival featuring *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic*, an experimental theatre performance based around the artist's life and featuring Abramovic herself. There is a sense that these works are valued because they challenge what's popular, because it shows "that we don't just do things that are bums on seats shows" (IV3, MIF Employee), and also because the reputation of MIF allows the Festival to present these challenging shows where other institutions or festivals may not be able to. This MIF employee went on to add that:

> "We have a lot of sold out events that on paper, if you presented them, if other people in the city presented them I don't think they'd go down as well. So I think there's something about it being under the umbrella of the Festival that makes people more receptive to it. And I get the sense that people *expect* to be challenged now" (IV3, MIF Employee).

In addition to this, the international aspect of shows such as *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic* or *Macbeth*, which go on to tour after their MIF runs have finished, means they become the most well-known markers of the Festival's ethos, "taking the name of

Manchester around the world" (IV3, MIF Employee), which this employee felt "particularly reflects well on what the Festival is trying to achieve and what Manchester, in backing the Festival as it does, tries to achieve with it" (IV3, MIF Employee). Other employees echoed this sentiment, saying that *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic* "has been a big shift change, you know? The most challenging, biggest, largest, artistic production; won awards and stuff" (IV4, MIF Employee). There is a strong awareness here of the desire to present the Festival as a leading light within its field, and the way in which these higher profile events associated with high art enable the transmission of this message to a wider audience, just as it will be seen that the design and layout of the MIF office is intended to give the impression of a leading organisation.

Yet despite some of the snobbery associated with the commissioning of 'challenging' high art pieces, there remains a feeling amongst those involved in MIF that the Festival is of value not purely for its artistic integrity that positions it as a mark of quality but for the message that such events can convey regarding the character of the city. One interviewee, for example, commented that both MIF and Manchester's Pride festival give a sense of pride in the city, suggesting that "what they have in common is the city becomes a destination for people interested in something other than the day to day. People can come and explore ideas here, and the fact that the city supports both those things makes it a reason to be cheerful" (IV16, MIF Artist). This is a positive and almost romanticised idea of MIF's role within the city and the value it displays (not to mention a view that resonates with Floridian ideas of attracting the Creative Class).

However, as we have seen in the case of events' connections with the community and the sense of being 'of Manchester', there appears to be a genuine level of belief amongst those involved with MIF that these events do more than attract audiences, they are seen by these individuals to articulate a deeper engagement with the city, in turn representing both MIF and Manchester as open and welcoming, tallying with the ethos of Original Modern discussed in Chapter 6 and evidencing the tension highlighted there between values of inclusion and ambition. This appears to be articulated not only through MIF's events, but also through its everyday practices. Having explored this through the events of MIF, therefore, the examination below considers the ways in which the places and people connected with the Festival help to position it in particular ways. The micro-processes of day-to-day office life are used here in order to draw parallels between the representations that come out of the Festival's public-facing events, and those that come out of the lesser-seen activities of the MIF team.

7.3 The Micro-processes of MIF

The previous chapter positioned MIF as an exemplar of an Original Modern ethos, or, rather, as this being the desired outcome according to those with a level of power over and vested interest in the Festival. Following on from this, the exploration of a number of MIF's events above has shown that alongside the 'high art' claims and associated prestige of a number of MIF commissions, there are also claims towards community focus and local relevance. We have seen that the Festival are keen to promote these claims order to position themselves as being connected to the city as well as showing themselves to be successful in the wider world. The ongoing access I had to the MIF offices between 2012 and 2013 afforded the opportunity to observe how these kinds of positioning were played out in the everyday activities of the Festival. To an extent it was surprising just how much connection there appeared to be between the 'brand' or 'ethos' of MIF and the way in which the office and its inhabitants played this out in reality.

What follows is a personal account of the demonstration of MIF's values through day-to-day practices of the Festival and its employees, interspersed with comments on similar themes expressed by interviewees. An examination of opinions surrounding volunteering and social media then serves to offer a different take on these micro-processes, showing a greater level of complexity in the practices of the Festival than office life alone can show. When combined with the discussion of MIF's events offered above, this gives evidence that beyond the desire to embody Original Modern, there are numerous other facets to MIF and its interactions.

7.3.1 The Office

MIF moved to new premises in June 2012. Having been interviewed for my position as administration assistant in the previous office, and attending meetings there on a number of occasions between 2010 and 2012, my first day as an MIF employee was the first time I had set foot in Blackfriars House. The difference between the offices was stark: MIF's previous home had been a slightly ramshackle, piecemeal affair, with everybody crammed into one floor of a Grade II listed building (erected in 1870) on King Street. Visiting the office during a Festival run was to enter a maze of boxes and piles of paper, desks barely discernible amongst the MIF paraphernalia. Now, on in this new home on Parsonage, a different story emerged: MIF now occupies the entire lower-ground floor of the building, with huge posters of past events lining the foyer, and a strict adherence to stark minimalism throughout the expansive, open-plan space with its whitewashed walls and exposed fixtures. The reception desk and shelving (as seen in

Figure 11) are bespoke, with much of the other furniture on loan from Ferrious, a high-end furniture store in the city, and I learnt early on in my time at MIF that senior members of the team had been reluctant to allow secure, metal filing cabinets beneath or between desks as they did not match this bespoke décor.
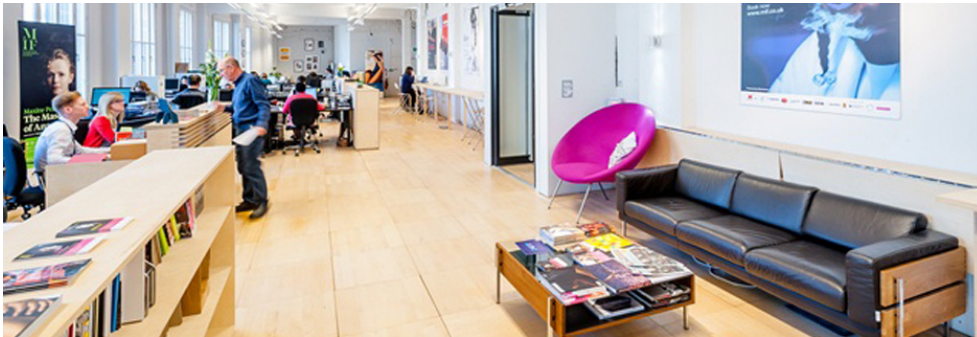
Figure 11: MIF Offices, Blackfriars House (Image courtesy of Bruntwood)

Whilst the move was instigated by Bruntwood (who have partnered with MIF and offered the Festival working premises since its inception), it seemed as though this new office had been treated as a chance to cement the Festival's image in a way that MIF's previous home had not been able to; a chance to prove credentials as an organisation out to impress its broad variety of visitors, from performers to sponsors to Council members to volunteers. This was achieved not only through the look of the room, but also the greeting given, with part of the reason for the appointment of dedicated administration assistants being the utilisation of this larger office to incorporate a dedicated reception desk which had been absent from the previous premises. This 'stylish' image appears to have a positive effect, with visitors – particularly (potential) sponsors – voicing approval on entrance on a number of occasions, and a visitor from MIF's drinks sponsor in June 2013 exclaiming when I greeted him at reception that it was the "coolest, trendiest" office he'd ever been in.

This care over the image of the Festival and the impact that it can have on those who come into contact with it is seemingly very subtly managed, with no 'rules' per se, but an often unspoken understanding that MIF fits into the 'hip' arts scene of Manchester, a kind of aloof cool – in 15 months, barely a day went by without employees complimenting one another on their clothes, for example. Through a build-up of these small incidences, these micro-processes of daily office life, an image of the Festival is fostered that is clearly intended to position MIF as a marker of style and quality, whether through the culture of MIF as a whole or through that of its employees.

It is evident that the design of the office is intended to match the values that are displayed within the Festival's printed materials (described as "Timeless, classic, elegant, […] running through the absolute veins of everything we do" – IV10, MIF Employee) – a facet related to Original Modern through the aim of the brand ethos to be easily translated across time periods – and one employee announced to me that "the office is now a very good demonstration of the brand values" in its current home at Blackfriars House (IV10, MIF Employee). Some employees even developed a tendency during my time at the Festival to refer to a fictitious MIF 'Aesthetics Committee', determining the look of the desks (I once spent an afternoon checking every branch of Ikea for a particular colour of discontinued desk), the type of flowers that should be on the front desk (requiring daily attention), the display of awards and printed materials on the shelves (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: MIF printed materials from MIF09 and MIF13

Whilst clearly being a tongue-in-cheek remark, this idea of an Aesthetics Committee displays an awareness of the image-consciousness that is ever-present within MIF. The design of the Festival's publicity matches this, with one interviewee suggesting that "I think this MIF brand is incredibly strong, I think it's been beautifully designed […] the idea of not compromising, and the way in which the print and everything else is produced, has meant it's got a very high level of recognition really quickly" (IV12, MIF Employee), adding their own story from the run-up to MIF13 in which "I took some programmes across to [a Royal Exchange employee], […] and her immediate reaction was 'god, it's beautiful isn't it? Your stuff's always beautiful'" (IV12, MIF Employee).

Much as with the appearance of the office, again this displays a careful construction of image designed to impress (rather than designed to accommodate or inform). There is also a self-congratulatory element to the way in which staff discuss this image, linking back to the 'personality' of the city that fed into the brand values discussed in the previous chapter. One Marketing Manchester employee referred to this as a Mancunian attitude whereby "sometimes it can be perceived as being cocky, but that is about its confidence" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee), and there is a distinct level of confidence evident in the Festival's offices and printed materials, with the minimalist style suggesting a belief in the ability of these images to communicate the Festival's aims and identity without giving much in the way of detailed information.

This seeming exclusivity portrayed in office style and the attitudes of employees out to impress at every opportunity (highly managed, a focus on slick simplicity) does not necessarily tally with some of the 'brand values' outlined in Chapter 6, however, and some employees were also keen to connect the Festival with the "brand value of respect" that IV13 described on page 128. In particular, IV10 wanted to express a desire to limit the boundaries between artists and the public at MIF:

> "I love the fact that artists hang out there [at Festival Square[27]] as well, so if you've just come for a sandwich, it's very likely in the past that you would have seen Rufus Wainright, or Victoria Wood. I'm not big on backstage VIP areas, I like people mingling, so the same applies at our first night party, I've been asked ever since we've done a first night party for 700 [people] 'can the artists have a backstage', and my answer's always no. I want them there, or I don't want them there at all. I'd rather they came with the spirit of the Festival" (IV10, MIF Employee)

To this interviewee, the spirit of the Festival is clearly one of inclusivity, of the 'live and let live' attitude that supposedly marks this Original Modern city (though even within the publicly accessible space of Festival Square it should be noted that, with its bars and food outlets, this is still a commercialised space and therefore there is a level of exclusivity here). Working in the MIF office led to the impression that this inclusive feel was one that was at least superficially intended to stretch to the workplace as well as the Festival's event spaces, and it was consistently evident that employees wanted to show the offices off to visitors as open, inclusive, and even fun (with the – seldom-used – ping pong table in the kitchen area, the 'quirky', brightly coloured furniture and the

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[27] Whilst the majority of the examples given here relate to the MIF offices, during the Festival itself Festival Square (also known as Albert Square, a short distance from the office, as shown in Figure 3 in the methodology, almost becomes an extension of the office due to the number of staff that can be found working or socializing there at any given time

piano in the boardroom). There is a sense, then, of the Festival portraying itself as an open organisation, without a clear hierarchy; open-plan offices, meetings on sofas in communal areas, all staff from directors to administrators getting together to share a falafel lunch or birthday cakes on the long dining table, a post-work film screening of *It's A Wonderful Life* in the boardroom before Christmas 2012. However, this supposed non-hierarchical system does not necessarily extend beyond surface-level interactions, with a variety of incidences across my 15 months in the field suggesting that openness within the confines of the office is more about the physical layout than the personal interaction. With this in mind, one colleague specifically referred to the need for the Festival to not be seen as "an impenetrable fortress" (from Field Diary, 30/10/12), and as shall be seen below, there is a sense that many of those involved in MIF are aware of levels of exclusivity around the Festival and its employees.

7.3.2 The People

As suggested in the image of MIF as "an impenetrable fortress", despite these apparent desires to foster inclusivity and openness through the layout of the office and other spaces such as Festival Square there is still some sense within MIF that there is some way to go if the Festival is to be truly open or accessible. One participant said "I think the Festival has to have a bit of a culture shift in order for that to happen. And I think we're getting there slowly, but I still think there's such a guarded culture within the Festival, and almost a desire to keep it like that" (IV2) (referring in particular here to the secrecy surrounding the announcement of the Festival programme). Indeed, my own personal experience was that this open-plan space could be anything but open, with hushed conversations within teams being far more the norm than inclusive conversation across teams, occasionally leading to problems when changes to events or schedules were not communicated widely. A primary example here was on-sale times of tickets (particularly for the incredibly popular Macbeth) not being passed on to reception (where the vast majority of ticketing queries were directed). There is thus an evident disconnect between a desire to appear open and a closed nature associated with a programme of events kept closely under wraps, and tensions between the positioning of the world-class arts festival and the claims of accessibility, driven by an awareness of the need to appeal to the ticket-buying public.

A part of this closed nature, or sense of reservation when it comes to a more free-flowing openness around the office, appears to come from the fact that from the office to the employees to the volunteers there is an element of those at the top wanting

everyone to be 'on brand'. One of the Festival's employees since its inception was very clear about this, suggesting that "a very intuitive thing I had when we were setting the Festival up was the sort of people I needed to deliver it. I know what makes up that sort of person and we take no prisoners!" (IV10, MIF Employee), going on to then discuss a bias towards the Festival that was within her and, she suggested, in me due to my ongoing involvement in MIF, claiming "it's like a narcotic, it has to seep into your veins, and if it doesn't or can't then it's not right" (IV10, MIF Employee). The passion in this statement was almost aggressive in its expression, and formed one of the points where my own employee/researcher boundaries felt tested, as the infectious enthusiasm for MIF displayed by those within its confines threatened to cloud critical judgement (although there was no indication that this was the intended outcome of the statement).

In considering the existence (or otherwise) of the 'right' kind of people for the Festival that IV10 speaks of – an ideal Festival employee, with passion for both MIF's programming and for Manchester in general – there is a parallel with some of the alternative networks discussed in the previous chapter. For example, one interviewee felt that there were some real differences within the MIF staff where treatment of volunteers was concerned, stating that "I've experienced people who've worked really well with volunteers, even if it's just smiling and saying hello, and people who have walked past with their nose in the air and they've got a badge on and you think, actually no, we're all in this together" (IV19, MIF Volunteer). This tallies with personal experience of combining triple roles within MIF: those of researcher, employee and volunteer. Despite having been open about my intentions to volunteer in order to gain a greater breadth of experience of the workings of MIF, colleagues expressed surprise or confusion on seeing me in my volunteer's t-shirt during the course of MIF13.

This was in particular evidence when I volunteered at *The Masque of Anarchy*, after which I noted "Many staff don't clock me in the blue t-shirt, just look through me, and one volunteer recognises me from the office and asks if I'm 'incognito'. The staff who do notice are confused, shocked, or both" (from Field Diary, 13/07/13). Much as with the office layout considered above, this is emblematic of some of the tensions around MIF's character and the way in which the Festival and its employees relate to the city. On the one hand there is a desire to be seen as inclusive, an emphasis on a strong volunteering community, and increasing emphasis on public engagement through MIF Creative. Yet on the other hand MIF remains an arts organisation populated predominantly by those who are nodes in a seemingly exclusive network of cultural institutions and individuals

across the city, meaning that the dominant representations that occur as a result of MIF are more likely to be those equated with elite concerns rather than a broader spread of ideas.

7.3.3 Being 'On Brand'

Through examining both MIF's events and the office and its employees at work, contradictions have emerged, with the desire to be 'on brand' and promote the Festival contradicting with the increasing desire for openness on the part of some employees. Secretive behaviour of the kind experienced in the MIF offices as highlighted above also counteracts the work done by some members of staff who have a strong understanding of the importance of including the volunteers in this brand identity as "the main marketing tool is word of mouth and the word of mouth is spreading through all those volunteers" (IV11, MIF Employee). This interviewee went on to describe what may appear to be a minor element of the work done with volunteers, but is telling of the attitude instilled in employees to promote MIF in a specific way, evidencing an inclusivity when it comes to brand messaging rather than a more inclusive approach to the wider community:

> "Even telling them we want them to say 'em eye eff' instead of 'mif', you know, because then if we get those hundreds of people saying it like that then it passes it on to all the visitors that you get. Those little bits which don't seem very important to an outsider but are to us because it is all about building the brand" (IV11, MIF Employee)

Whilst a small element of everyday practice within the Festival, it is incidences like this that build a bigger picture of MIF, of the ongoing desire to portray the Festival in tightly controlled ways without wanting to appear too rigid about this. A connected area of conflict occurs through MIF's use of social media, through which the values of the Festival are drawn out and spread to a wider audience, with the gradual opening of these communication channels being used to present the Festival as increasingly inclusive (though there are significant questions over the democratising potential of such media, given that those who 'like' on Facebook or 'follow' on Twitter are likely to predominantly be those who would seek out information about MIF without these platforms).

Table 9: Increase in MIF social media engagement, 2012 – 2013 (Source: Internal MIF information sheet)

Social Media Platform	June 2012 Figures	November 2013 Figures
Facebook	5,530 likes	6,230 likes
Twitter	13,372 followers	25,033 followers
YouTube	233,765 views	349,880 views

A significant shift between MIF11 and MIF13 has been the increase in use of social media to promote the Festival (see Table 9 which shows the increase in the Festival's social media activity between 2012 and 2013). As one volunteer explained (referring to Twitter), "having MIF13 as the hashtag[28], […] It's free marketing really. And it does create a buzz. […] they're putting things out, they're putting links to things that have been in the Guardian or in the Telegraph. I can be sitting on the train and I'll go 'oh right, I'll read that'" (IV19, MIF Volunteer), though they did then add that "people can also use it to highlight negative aspects. So we [MIF] do something bad they can just as easily go '#MIF13…', and they can put things on Facebook, and I've seen that." (IV19, MIF Volunteer).

Table 10: Use of #MIF13 on Twitter (Source: twitter.com)

Key Date	Number of Tweets using #MIF13
Programme Announcement (28/02/13)	657
On-Sale Day (01/03/13)	111
Opening Night (04/07/13)	1267
Closing Night (21/07/13)	218
TOTAL	2253

Whilst MIF has had an online presence since its inception, the introduction of the position of Digital Marketing Manager in 2012 has enabled greater online interaction between the Festival and those who follow on Twitter or like on Facebook, with the increases seen in Table 9 having occurred since this appointment. Around key dates connected with MIF13, for example, there were significant increases in the use of #MIF13 on Twitter (see Table 10), and whilst there is no comparative data available for previous festivals, this indicates an increased awareness on the part of the Festival that social media can improve the reach of MIF's brand. Indeed there was seemingly a greater focus on this kind of activity throughout the office in the run-up to MIF13, with around 10 staff (myself included) offered access to the Twitter account in order to have

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[28] A hashtag (#) is used on Twitter – and now Facebook – to identify tweets on a certain topic. For example, on searching for #MIF13, all tweets containing this hashtag would then be searchable in one place.

different Festival teams engaging with followers in this way. It is this kind of engagement that provides an example of the way that everyday activities such as social media use, or micro-processes of the Festival, contribute to its representation.

Clearly there is an issue here in that the use of such media only reaches certain audiences. One interviewee, on relating MIF's focus on online engagement to her role at work, explained that "my company's been doing quite a lot of work with the Poverty Commission, and the second biggest issue […] from local people is lack of access to the internet, so actually at a very basic level, how's that [online engagement such as that pursued by MIF] reaching anyone?" (IV18). There is seemingly a correlation here between the intention of using social media versus its actual reach, and the Festival's other practices such as the questions around openness of the open-plan office discussed above. This resonates with the comment considered in the previous chapter that "the best way to get a reputation is to be what you desire to appear" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee), a point also considered by one MIF Artist who summed up the city's attempts at brand positioning by stating that "you attract who you want to attract by the way you dress yourself" (IV16, MIF Artist). MIF's social media use, alongside its office micro-processes, shows a veneer of accessibility over a strong awareness of image and brand.

What the micro-processes of the office and the comments of interviewees considered above suggest is that despite a strong adherence to the Original Modern ethos, the desires of how MIF should appear are multiple and varied, a finding which can also be applied to the variety of events held by MIF and their intended audiences and impacts. The tensions here are around different levels of support for the different ways that MIF can be presented. Those keen to stress an agenda of openness and inclusivity by highlighting the value in the more community-drive events primarily belong to the alternative networks described in the previous chapter who perhaps do not have the level of power that high-level MIF or MCC employees do.

7.4 Articulating Tensions

There are a number of tensions that can be drawn out from the discussion above, and indeed a number of tensions that connect the events and micro-processes considered here to the findings outlined in Chapter 6; from the desire to portray the office as hip and trendy yet simultaneously open and accepting, to the differentiation between events that cement MIF's international arts standing and those that have more of an impact on

the local community, and the questions over whether MIF really portrays 'urgent stories of our time', and whose stories these may be. From spending a lengthy period within the Festival, these tensions seemed apparent within the staff dynamic, a sort of hesitancy towards articulating personal feelings on what MIF is for and what kind of culture is valued within the Festival.

This was perhaps summed up most neatly by a volunteer, who, when asked what messages about the Festival they feel compelled to pass on to fellow volunteers and the public when acting as a Team Leader, commented that "I think if I'm promoting anything to them it's the vibrancy, the diversity, and the amount that's actually going to be going on in those three weeks, rather than an impression of what the Festival means because I think it means different things to different people" (IV19, MIF Volunteer). Expanding upon this, they stressed how they wanted to show people the variety of events on offer, acknowledging a level of ambivalence or annoyance that MIF can bring out within people:

> "there can be a bit of an attitude from people who are in Manchester of 'well why's this happening? Why are we putting money into this?', and 'it's not for me', and it is for them, and it's on their doorstep, and you know, it's amazing that it is on their doorstep, and it would be great if they would also get involved in it" (IV19, MIF Volunteer)

Yet there is not necessarily a great strength of message that MIF is "for them", with past MIF evaluations showing that MIF audiences tend to come from particular sections of the community, such as the evaluation of MIF07 which states that 78% of attendees were from social grades A, B or C1, and only 4% were from grades C2, D and E[29] (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2008: 55). The very demarcation of those in the know and those unaware of the Festival that this language suggests is telling of the continued distancing between MIF and some of the inhabitants of its environs. One interviewee in particular summed up this feeling – one that, as an MIF attendee and believer in the positive impact of the arts, I felt a particular affinity with – by saying "I am conflicted because I do believe in the power of art and culture and I think everyone deserves access to it, but I just don't think that the Festival is particularly for people that live here very much" (IV18, Community Worker). They then went on to explain:

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[29] The classifications here are as follows: Upper Middle Class (A), Middle Class (B), Lower Middle Class (C1), Skilled Working Class (C2), Working Class (D) and Subsistence (E)

> "it does have loads of fabulous things that are really exciting, but it always feels really disconnected to the reality of the city, and I'm not convinced it does engage as much as it thinks it does with people that live here. And I feel very much that it's for a certain kind of person, many of whom don't live here" (IV18, Community Worker)

The sense of disconnect articulated here mirrors a number of the tensions discussed in this chapter, and draws out some of the discomfort that is evident within the micro-processes within the everyday workings of MIF. Although what "reality of the city" intended by this interviewee was not made clear, it was as though there is an unspoken barrier between the well-meaning arts festival that wishes to be of its city, and the vast majority of residents for whom such events may have little bearing on their day-to-day lives. In some cases, this causes antagonism, particularly where the question of worth and ticket prices are concerned. One MIF employee in particular related this to me as a frustrating experience:

> "people are prepared to pay what they see the value as, if [the interviewee's acquaintance being referred to in this story] thinks it's worth paying £150 to see Madonna how can he then say that, you know, £30 for an experience which could be life-changing is expensive? But that was his perception. And at the same time, with him saying niche, well I don't like the X Factor. So I deserve a Festival that is about intellectual culture, I want that, and I want that in this city. I don't want the life of Manchester to just be about football and the X Factor. I am a tax payer, and I deserve something which fulfills me culturally, and I think to describe something as niche, all you're saying is it's not for you. Well the X Factor's not for me. So I have no problem with it being perceived as, if you like, elitist" (IV2, MIF Employee)

There is a clear defensiveness within this discussion, which essentially is about cultural value, an ongoing argument that is currently being played out within broader discussions around the future of funding for the arts (a topic that shall be considered in greater detail in Chapter 8), and one that is related to ongoing questions of the differences (or otherwise) between high and popular culture, the distinction between these and the potentially different audiences that they attract. MIF's everyday activities and its events play out here as a microcosm of the cultural value argument, and though the question of who MIF is for will be tackled in the following chapter, the assertion by this employee, who has worked in a variety of cultural institutions around the city, that they had "no problem with it [MIF] being perceived as […] elitist" (IV2) seems to come closer to the overall reading of MIF's micro-processes and what they suggest about Manchester's

cultural narrative more broadly than the comments of the majority of interviewees: an acknowledgement that the ethos of the Festival is not for everyone.

Even within the MIF Creative projects such as those outlined above, there is some difficulty in breaking down the barriers between this desire for high art, or artistic integrity, and wider impact. As one MIF employee stressed, "it's part of my team's role to manage the MIF Creative projects so that they have artistic integrity, with meaningful community engagement, and that can be a really tricky balance sometimes" (IV17, MIF Employee). Additionally, tensions are also evident within the cultural or arts audiences of Manchester, which one past MIF Collaborator was keen to stress:

> "it [MIF] does the high level, high maintenance art and culture well, but what its relationship is to the world that I still see myself as being more at home in and more excited by, which is the world of the grassroots, marginal, undercapitalised, pioneering, maverick youth culture stroke alternative culture in the city, I don't think MIF can do both things, it can't please Frieze magazine[30] and Alan Yentob[31] at the same time as pleasing your creative, maverick, fanzine reading, scenester weirdo. But, the weird thing about Manchester is that that fanzine, scenester weirdo, those people were the people who created, and founded, Manchester as an artistic city" (IV7, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

So not only do some see MIF as not being for the general public of Manchester, there are some who have worked with the Festival who also see it as not connecting with the kind of audiences that, in a way, paved the way for events on this scale to be possible. To an extent, these tensions should have little relevance: no event can truly be designed to represent an entire city and its myriad communities. Yet, with significant levels of funding from MCC (provided in part through local taxation), there is an expectation that MIF should impact on the lives of residents as well as the economic future of the city. Speaking of their own cultural institution within the city, one interviewee commented on this by saying of the local population, "they're paying for it, for the most part. So I want to work with people who live here. And yes, I want to provide economic impact and I want to bring in visitors to the city, because I like the city, I care about it" – with the inference then being that if the local population are not engaged, this is a lesser success, adding that "I think it's important for what we create, that it's something you can only get in Manchester. That Mancunians buy it. That they recognise

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[30] Frieze is a contemporary arts and culture magazine established in 1991
[31] Alan Yentob has worked at the BBC since 1968, occupying various director and controller positions and presenting arts series *Imagine*

themselves in it. And without necessarily dumbing it down." (IV15, Cornerhouse/Home Employee).

One reason for this ongoing tension between high art ambitions (including the impact this has on tourism and a boosted profile of the city) and local impact in the case of MIF is the 'International' aspect, with one Council member saying that "I do say that there is a clue within the title, it does say the *International* Festival, this is not the Manchester Local Festival and that distinction is quite important" (IV9, MCC Employee), and another stressing that the general public and local artists do not necessarily see this distinction:

> "I find when you're dealing with artists, particularly locally based artists, they don't get the International bit of the title, so they say 'well I don't understand why my work isn't in and why you're not using locally-based artists' and you're like, well because the clue's about the International bit, so I think it's important to represent Manchester somehow within it, because otherwise it could be happening anywhere, but not to go, so every year we must do a show, that has something to do with Manchester, and that becomes your reasoning as opposed to the quality" (IV3, MIF Employee)

Much as with the discussion above around the importance or otherwise of hosting events with a Mancunian connection, the international aspect of MIF highlights an ongoing tension between the different scales of desire where Festival programming and outcome are concerned, not only in terms of a disconnect between the aims of the Festival and the desires of the public, but also conflict within MIF itself as to how to balance and manage these tensions (in the following chapter, a more detailed consideration of the questions that arise from this will be given).

7.5 Conclusions

Both personal observations and the comments of others highlighted above suggest that the portrayals of MIF and Manchester through both office micro-processes and individual events are not universal. Instead they draw out a number of tensions and contradictions around questions of local or international impact, high art or popular culture, and how best to represent the seemingly disparate desires within MIF and also between MIF and its funders. What this suggests is that despite a high level of control within the office over how the Festival desires to appear (the conscious positioning of cultural significance), there are still questions around who MIF is actually for, a question that is of significance when a series of events such as this is funded in part from the

public purse. In particular, the study of micro-processes afforded by the ethnographic approach taken to this research has offered a view of cultural events not often explored within cultural regeneration research, providing an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the desires that drive those within MIF and contrast these with the image of the Festival and the city that is sought through programming and promotional materials. This gives a clearer idea of the ways in which MIF represents Manchester, and shows how the Festival's practices are bound up with both place-marketing (through the advertising of Manchester as a name for cultural excellence both nationally and internationally), and perhaps place-making with the connections to values and the desire to be somehow of the city.

The material discussed here appears to suggest that whilst there has been an ongoing increase in the connection between MIF and local audiences, primarily through the work of MIF Creative and an increase in free events, the everyday practices of the Festival, its events programmes and the way in which it is seen by cultural and civic elites continues to follow an adherence to forms associated with high culture, and the attracting of national or international audiences. The inference here is that the levels of power held by these elites, and the cultural capital that they hold, enables them to dictate the representation of Manchester that MIF portrays to (inter)national as well as local audiences, displaying this through the everyday workings of the Festival as well as the events commissioned for each Festival. Following the discussion of events and micro-processes within MIF and how these produce an articulation of the Festival, we turn to the question of how these events and micro-processes, along with the connections to Original Modern, position MIF within a broader set of narratives about the city of Manchester.

8 Discussion and Analysis

8.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have considered how MIF is both a production of particular understandings of the city and a producer of these understandings. The ways in which the Festival's events and practices reflect or challenge these understandings have been explored through the networks involved in MIF and, more broadly, the city's cultural landscape. Through examining a historical trajectory of culture and urban regeneration in Manchester, it has been shown that attempts have been made to position MIF as part of an ongoing narrative of the city, in which markers of success have been held up as evidence of a pioneering city of firsts in order to position the city as unique, outward-facing and competitive in a manner that resonates with much of the literature on culture's use within urban regeneration (Hannigan, 1998; Mommaas, 2004). An examination of MIF's events and practices has revealed a significant level of correlation with this projection of the forward-thinking, well-respected city, and yet a number of findings suggest a more complex picture in which tensions arise between different actors and varying visions of the role of culture and the arts within a contemporary urban landscape.

A number of questions thus arise from the themes discussed up to this point, displaying tensions around the uses of culture: questions of local versus (inter)national importance, of economy versus community, of 'high' versus 'popular' art. Whilst these are by no means binary terms of discussion, they are areas of tension that are drawn out through consideration of the use of culture within the city, whereby different actors with varying interests shape the contested area of representations of the city through the promotion and support of cultural events. In the discussion that follows, these themes are given further consideration, taking the empirical evidence and using it to examine the contribution that such findings make to the field of culture and urban regeneration studies. It is posited that although many of the findings in this work resonate with the dominant tropes within culture-led regeneration literature, such as a focus on economy and tourism, or the increasing co-option of culture by local authorities and other urban elites, there is evidence here to suggest that the desires of those involved in the process of promoting and delivering cultural events are more varied and complex than related literature currently tends to imply. It is suggested that this complexity affects the processes whereby understandings of the city are formed through MIF, showing that both the events included within MIF's programming and the everyday practices

observed within the Festival help to shape the way that the contemporary city of Manchester is portrayed to a wider public.

A number of different interests and views are in evidence amongst those involved in MIF, opening up the opportunity for further debate around the value of arts events, and culture more generally, within cities and their attendant regeneration strategies. Whereas much of the literature around culture and urban regeneration takes as its starting point a focus on local authorities and the ways in which they utilise culture (for example the reflections upon Liverpool's experiences of culture-led regeneration such as Connolly, 2013 and Cox and O'Brien, 2012), the research presented here allows this to be problematised by offering a balance between the views of those within local authorities and those within the cultural organisations that benefit (at least in terms of patronage) from the support that local authorities can offer. This indicates that even within an apparently mutually beneficial relationship between these two bodies, different goals and desires are at play.

In relating to the theoretical background discussed in Chapter 4, it is suggested that by viewing the field of culture and urban regeneration through a cultural studies lens, a greater level of depth and nuance can be attributed to regeneration literature, using theoretical bases not often given weight within a field more generally concerned with policy studies. In exploring culture and urban regeneration with a focus on the ways in which power and capital relate to the creation of a sense of place, greater consideration is given to the production and mobilisation of culture within cities, extending this beyond the often narrow terms of reference seen in the areas of cultural policy and evaluation. This enables the examination of taken-for-granted structures and processes and offers a critique that is lacking in more policy-focused urban regeneration literature. It allows culture's role within urban regeneration and ongoing urban development in a post-regeneration era to be held up as an example of how power and capital are reproduced by a minority of individuals or groups within the city, thus uncovering views on how culture is valued and some of the issues around this in terms of whose culture is represented within these dominant narratives of the city. Additionally, an examination of practices enables exploration of the richness of ideas behind the deployment of culture within urban regeneration.

8.2 MIF: Elite, economic practice?

Evidence from previous chapters suggests that the practices of MIF can be viewed in a number of different ways, and indeed that interviewees with different backgrounds and levels of involvement with the Festival have differing views as to what and who MIF is for. As discussed in the context of the research outlined in Chapter 2, cultural events are not value-free, and are instead active mechanisms within processes of urban regeneration that have their own power structures and are used and portrayed in carefully constructed ways. Holden's suggestion that Manchester's politics and regeneration schemes form part of "an elite-based strategy" (2002: 153) has also been considered, and there is certainly a body of evidence to suggest that this carries through into Manchester's cultural landscape as viewed through MIF. The majority of interviewees quoted within the empirical observations in both Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 (such as those working for MCC and MIF) form part of a close-knit group with power and control over a portion of decision-making within the city, and the experience of observing MIF's working practices show this through the 'usual suspects' encountered.

Despite this, however, the findings discussed in the preceding two chapters paint a picture of greater complexity, whereby these urban elites, both political and cultural, display very different motivations, with commitments towards tourism and the economy, but also towards a 'quality' cultural offer (by which interviewees meant a level of 'high' culture that was previously lacking within the city) and also towards more non-traditional arts audiences as displayed through the alternative networks of MIF Volunteers and MIF Creative, showing a level of commitment towards the extension and building of cultural capital within the city. At one level, the findings appear to equate to an occasionally uneasy balance between the economy-focused MCC view and an arts-focused MIF view, where these two bodies possess differing opinions of cultural value yet aim for the same end result.

It is evident that MCC employees are driven by economic success, with the city's cultural strategies forming part of a wider economic strategy, yet we have seen that MIF employees (perhaps unsurprisingly) are keen to focus on the artistic and social benefits that the Festival has to offer. This is an alternative view not often represented within studies on culture and urban regeneration due to the aforementioned tendency to approach such work from the point of view of the local authority, and the relative ease of measurement in economic terms. And yet, as IV10 spoke of in terms of the level of trust between MCC and MIF on page 136, there is a setting-aside of the differences in

opinion where the drive behind cultural activity is concerned, because the relationship between these cultural and civic bodies represents a mutually beneficial symbiosis, MCC's patronage allowing MIF to pursue ambitious programming that may not otherwise be possible.

As previously articulated, Atkinson (1999) views delegated power and symbolic authority as leading to the power to name (Bourdieu, 1991) and privilege certain representations within a contemporary urban regeneration landscape. Through the development of Original Modern (see Chapter 6), this 'power to name' is played out through the urban and cultural elites of Manchester, who feed the perpetuation of the representation of Manchester as the self-styled 'city of firsts'. If this were to align with the dominant narratives of culture-led regeneration literature, then the regeneration side, and the case for privileging the economy and tourism (such as that highlighted by Evans, 2005), would be dominant within MIF. Yet there is evidence here to suggest that whilst MIF may be considered an elite project, the idea that this forms a predominantly economic rationale for cultural regeneration is reductive and underplays the tensions inherent in understandings of cultural value.

Whilst literature and policy around urban regeneration stress the desire for multifaceted benefits – including through culture (Evans, 2005; Miles, 2005; Roberts, 2000), and those within cultural policy particularly stress the less tangible benefits that culture has on society (such as RSA and ACE, 2013), the tensions between these different impacts can be underplayed. In addressing this within the case of MIF, these tensions are discussed below, with the case for MIF's role in the boosting of Manchester's (tourist) economy set against a belief in the power of (elite) arts, and the less tangible understandings of cultural value represented by community engagement.

8.2.1 The case for economy and tourism

Returning to Scott's suggestion, there has been "a very marked convergence between the spheres of cultural and economic development" (1997: 323) that has continued into the 21st Century, and MIF is no exception to this trend. Whether through the lens of cultural policy (the RSA and ACE report referred to on pages 39-40 where MIF is praised in terms of its role in "leveraging additional investment" (2013: 60)), or through urban policy more generally (such as IV6's acknowledgement on page 118 of the instrumentalisation of culture, stating that "we were very good by that time [of the 2002 Commonwealth Games] at being able to articulate what it is that sells a city"), the story

of the economic rationale behind MIF is a strong one. As one interviewee asserted, "Look at the economic benefit, you know, well exceeded the expectation of £37m for the last Festival [MIF11] on economic impact. That just absolutely speaks for itself" (IV6, MCC Employee). There is a case here of the power of the council telling an economic story, presenting this as of primary importance from a position of privilege.

It was particularly the interviewees from MCC who were clear and firm about the economic rationale of supporting a cultural event, from suggesting that where this support is concerned "it's not because we love arts and culture, it is about jobs" (IV9, MCC Employee), to confirming that "we don't invest in the Festival just because everyone can enjoy themselves for a couple of weeks every two years, we do it because it's a fundamental part of our economic growth agenda" (IV8, MCC Employee), and asserting that "at the end of the day, economically it works" (IV6, MCC Employee). The economic story is not purely of importance to MCC, but also private sector funders, as we saw in the example of Bruntwood's continued support of MIF in its provision of Festival premises since 2007 discussed on page 136. It is also important to MIF itself, as can be seen through the highlighting of economic impact within MIF's official documentation, such as the emphasis in the evaluation of MIF07 that the Festival was "a very significant contributor to the […] economic wellbeing of Manchester". There is thus a level of positioning of this economic story as of significance and importance to not only MCC, but private funders and MIF as well.

A sub-set of this economic story is its international aspect, framed in previous chapters predominantly as an exercise in representing the city to a wider audience, yet once again the measures of success are drawn out, at least to an extent, in economic terms, as was explained by one MIF employee:

> "in a hard-nosed spend, an international visitor is going to spend loads more here in the city aren't they, than a local one, and then they're going to tell their friends that they've had a good time, they're going to come back, they're going to come back[…] you know, it's that reach, isn't it? So our ticket buyers in '09, there was only about 1% of our ticket buyers we could trace to being international. Last year [for MIF11], it was nearly 8[%]. So that's a massive, massive increase. So, you know, it's that idea of what do they bring? I mean they bring masses of investment, masses of stuff here, but then they go back, who do they tell, how does that reach out and how many more people know about us for next time?" (IV4, MIF Employee)

Although there is a suggestion here that 'reach' is important for its own sake, or for increased awareness and the development of tourism, it is very much framed by a focus on investment, and increasing investment over time from individuals across a wider field, a greater distance from the city, connecting economic impact, international image and tourism. This was seen in Bruntwood's focus on the "longer term benefits to its [Manchester's] international profile" referenced in Chapter 6, and the highlighting in the same chapter of the MIF07 Festival leaflet's claim that through MIF, "Manchester's position as a truly international city will be enhanced" by hosting premieres of newly commissioned events that then tour the world taking Manchester's name along with them. As discussed in Chapter 7, many of MIF's events do appear to connect strongly with this focus on an external audience and a push for international recognition, particularly touring shows such as MIF13's *Macbeth* or MIF11's *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic*. Whilst not directly synonymous with economic imperatives, this view of culture as tool for tourism not only feeds into the discourse of the competitive city sought by MCC and Marketing Manchester, but also fits neatly with the economic rationale forged by MCC – particularly as, following IV4's comments above, international visitors are likely to spend more money within the city than their local MIF-going counterparts.

The economic evidence for MIF's continuation, including the touristic element that comes from markers of visitor spend within the city, is thus one that is positioned as of importance by Festival employees, but predominantly by primary funders such as MCC. However, the economic argument, despite carrying weight through the numerical evidence and the assured nature of MCC's claims, lacks nuance. There is a suggestion that the numbers 'speak for themselves', which, of course, they appear to, yet these assurances are dry and fail to account for the multiplicity of impacts and cultural events on the scale of MIF can have. Despite interviewees' insistence on the importance of the economy, there was little evidence through observation of the Festival's day-to-day practices outlined in Chapter 7 to suggest that money formed a primary objective, or even that the push towards, for example, increased national and international visitors equated to a monetary value in the minds of those closely involved in the Festival (though this is perhaps common across all fields where patronage plays a significant role). Clearly certain elements of MIF – such as the Development team, whose role consists of drawing in funding to MIF – focus upon economic objectives, yet overall the positioning of MIF through its appearance, its everyday practices and its events did not suggest, to an involved observer such as myself, that economic benefit, even the slightly

more convoluted sense of economic benefit that comes through increased tourism, was of the greatest importance. To MIF employees, perhaps unsurprisingly, it was the art that was of primary importance, and it is to this that we now turn.

8.2.2 The case for 'elite' arts

Despite the clear economic rationale outlined by MCC and through MIF's official documentation, my time spent in the field suggested that those involved with the Festival, particularly those outside the Council, possessed a strength of opinion that culture and the arts matter on multiple levels, not purely that of economic benefit. With a lack of quantitative markers, the case of alternative benefits is evidently harder to prove than the numbers offered by economic impact (Evans, 2005, 2009; Garcia, 2004a), and, to an extent, involves working on hunch and instinct rather than 'hard' (economic) evidence. There is, however, a distinct element of MIF's practice which is more closely related to the 'art for art's sake' argument, which was considered in varying ways across Chapter 7, from the positioning of MIF as part of a particular cultural 'scene' through its office layout, to the focus mentioned on page 166 of not just offering "things that are bums on seats shows" (IV3, MIF Employee) and the ongoing use of the phrase '18 Extraordinary Days', all of which were given as examples of MIF's positioning through its practices and micro-processes.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, amongst interviewees it was the artists themselves who were keen to stress this side of the story, with one interviewee in particular stressing the wider, less tangible benefits of culture and the arts:

> "I think the way a place treats its art and its culture is the health of its spirit really and the health of its community, and I think celebrating things together for everybody, and not dumbing that down, not putting things on that you know get half a million viewing figures every Saturday, but putting things on that challenge and express and make people think, you know, is to not patronise the people of Manchester, it's to aggrandise" (IV16, MIF Artist)

Whilst this comment could be seen as self-serving, and is speaking of "not dumbing that down" from a position of a certain level of acquired cultural capital through decades of artistic work (in this case, music) and a level of critical and commercial success, there are similarities here with a number of cultural value arguments. Clearly the use of the word 'health' is not to suggest that a city's cultural events are beneficial to communities in a strictly medical sense. However, this suggestion that culture and the arts can contribute

to wider wellbeing resonates with a number of facets of the cultural value arguments discussed in Chapter 3, such as the RSA and ACE's claims to the arts as something that can "illuminate our inner lives" (page 39). There are connections here with the consideration in Chapter 6 of Manchester's identity as expressed through the phrase Original Modern, with the idea that challenging ideas and expressions form a part of the city's history (such as its history of radicalism and protest).

The combination of this pride in "not dumbing that down" and challenging an audience with the suggestion that events such as those produced by MIF are about "celebrating things together for everybody" is related to another theme covered within Chapter 6, that of the tensions that can occur between themes of 'inclusivity' and 'live-and-let live' and the constructed Mancunian identity of ambition, pride and self-confidence that fed into the development of the Original Modern ethos. There was no indication amongst interviewees, or through ongoing examination of, and involvement in, the everyday life of MIF, that these facets of identity appeared mutually exclusive to those who played them out, with Festival employees seemingly viewing MIF as accessible (for example through its range of events – including free events) whilst also being competitive and ambitious. It could be suggested that this simultaneous holding of a belief in pride and self-confidence alongside inclusivity is emblematic of a belief in the wider possibilities of culture's role within contemporary society, indicating a belief in culture's multifaceted benefits that is better articulated through actions than through words. In Bourdieu's terms, this equates to the emphasis on embodied practices rather than articulation. Attempts to articulate a belief in culture's role in this way were made by some interviewees, for example the artist who stated that "whoever says that 'that doesn't speak to me, why are you spending my money on that' a) doesn't know the way the Festival's funded, and b) doesn't understand the importance of innovation and creation" (IV16, MIF Artist). The defiance or defensiveness here is indicative of some of the difficulties in articulation of cultural value, and a level of exasperation at the ways in which such value is presented to a wider audience, as well as hinting at a snobbishness that attempts to gloss over this tension between inclusivity and ambition.

It is apparent, therefore, that the case for MIF as a presenter of 'elite' arts is comprised partly of an 'art for art's sake' argument, but also that it ties back into themes of both ambition and a desire for wider relevance, as well as the ability of culture and the arts to play a role in the repositioning of city identity through place-marketing or place-making (as discussed in Chapter 6). One MIF employee was particularly keen to stress this link

between the case for high art and its connection with the city's reputation, by focusing on the words of one of the Festival's more controversial artists:

> "I will directly quote Marina Abramovic who said 'Manchester is no longer just about football, it's about culture'. And I think it's that. I think if you go around the world, wherever you go and you say you're from Manchester [people mention Manchester United]. And we all know that. And that's not a bad thing, it's good to be identified with something, but all those people who have no interest in football - and there are some - I think things like the Manchester International Festival, well, *specifically* the Manchester International Festival, is increasingly becoming part of a cultural calendar that people are aware of" (IV2, MIF Employee)

There is an attitude here reminiscent of that of IV20, whose comments on Manchester's connection with football, and the way in which this reading of place was viewed as "not particularly attractive, or urgent, or important" were reflected on in Chapter 6. Both of these interviewees come from a position of high cultural capital and use this position of relative power to articulate a belief in the differences in value between sports and 'high art'. Yet there is more to be considered here, primarily the way in which cultural events – particularly those associated with high culture such as the work of Marina Abramovic – are positioned as worthy by those involved with MIF. We have seen here that MCC's belief in the importance of economic benefit outlined above, and the suggestions here around the importance of the availability of high quality art, both relate back to themes of connecting the city with a wider audience, particularly an increasingly international audience. It can be posited therefore that MIF should not be considered solely an elite economic practice, or elite cultural project. Instead, the discussion above suggests that despite having different foci, these two elements overlap in terms of the kind of mutually beneficial relationship between MCC and MIF, leading to both positive outcomes (such as the Festival's economic impact for the city) and tensions between different understandings of cultural value.

Beyond this, there is clearly a more complex picture to be understood here, with efforts towards community engagement and a belief in the importance of events such as MIF for a wider community forming another focus of the Festival that is not fully represented by the arguments around economy and 'elite' arts. What follows is a focus on the threads that run between these economic and artistic foci, not merely in terms of the connection to repositioning of city identity but also the lesser-told stories of community engagement that have been set out in previous chapters through discussion

of alternative networks and events that display a level of community focus. Questions of cultural value are further teased out, with a consideration of whether the lesser promotion of the community side of the Festival is emblematic of a wider systematic prioritisation of city centre-focused, economic imperatives across MCC.

8.2.3 A more complex picture

The discussion above suggests that whilst the economic, touristic and arts-focused rationales behind MIF's continued existence display different facets, and are emphasised by different individuals and groups connected with the Festival, they can be connected by a common thread around using culture to project a particular image of Manchester to a wider public, as suggested through the discussion of Original Modern in Chapter 6. There are elements of this, however, that cannot be tied into this set of desired narratives that attempt to marry economy and arts. It was suggested on page 136 that there is evidence of symbiosis between MCC's economic rationale for cultural funding and MIF's focus on culture and the arts due to the mutual benefit that each receives from the other, yet this assertion belies a level of complexity when it comes to consideration of MIF as an elite practice.

Beginning from connections to the economy, more complex monetary issues are discussed below, in terms of both affordability and worth or value placed on the arts. Related issues around MIF's often-obscured community programmes are then considered, along with issues around trickle-down rationales and assumed benefits. Despite the Festival's shift over the years to being 'more appropriate for our times', we finally focus upon the way in which the picture of inclusivity offered by Original Modern and MIF is (as outlined above and in Chapter 6) constructed by a small number of people – those with a power to name (Bourdieu, 1991)– some of whom may display a relative lack of understanding of the arts compared to those working directly within the field. A final tension is then considered, recognising that even with a level of coherence around a city brand or ethos (a level of coherence that is questionable in the case of Original Modern, given the lack of widespread use of the phrase), the multiplicity of roles that a city plays to its inhabitants and visitors cannot be adequately reflected within this. This multiplicity then leads to a situation where, perhaps inevitably, the priorities are set by a minority with the power to do so.

A great deal of the complexity surrounding the economic aspects of MIF considered above comes down to the dual issues of the 'worth' of culture and questions of

inclusivity. Many interviewees related this to the comparison of ticket prices with other forms of entertainment (as IV8 commented, "if you're a Manchester City or Manchester United fan, you know, not everyone can afford to pay 50, 60 quid to watch a football match, but that's the way that the world is at the moment […] it's no more expensive to watch part of the Festival than it is to go and watch City or United"), but also the assumption that cheap or free events equal accessibility, displayed by a number of interviewees, particularly those from MCC. Both the increase in the number of free events over the four Festivals held thus far and the introduction of £12 tickets for local residents[32] in MIF13 have been held up as examples of MIF's level of engagement with local audiences, as the comments below suggest:

> "what I think the Festival does better than most is create real platforms for universal participation and enjoyment, where everyone, irrespective of age, sex, colour, affordability – because it's free – can enjoy the Festival" (IV8, MCC Employee)

> "we've still got a bit of work to make sure the benefit of what is, you know, generally a high priced festival – you know, high ticket cost – gets that direct benefit to residents, but that's why we've introduced this year the £12 tickets so, and there's always been a number of free events" (IV6, MCC Employee)

> "I do think that the Festival has been very, very successful, partly through the Festival Creative programme but also through the number of free events that take place in every programme, of also being able to be attractive to the local population" (IV9, MCC Employee)

There is direct opposition here to IV2's comments on accessibility on page 172, whereby MIF falls into a trap of assuming that cheaper tickets equate to greater accessibility and engagement. IV8's comment that MIF creates "real platforms for universal participation and enjoyment" is key here, as it does not suggest that MIF is making claims to participation for all, merely the platform for potential participation. When pressed on this topic of meaningful engagement, one interviewee gave a particularly vehement response, saying that:

> "if you're determined to live in your bedsit watching daytime television all the time in wherever it might be on the outskirts of Manchester and never come into the city centre, then it might be hard for you to get an effect of it. But it'd be hard for

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[32] For MIF13, a £12 ticket scheme was introduced by the Festival. A number of tickets (an undisclosed percentage of total capacity) priced at £12 were available to local residents on a lower wage (defined as at or below the living wage outside of London, calculated in 2013 as £7.45 per hour) for each Festival performance. (See http://www.mif.co.uk/about-us/mif-12-tickets/)

anybody to reach you, and I think if you have half a willingness
to engage in it, there's something for everybody in the Festival"
(IV5, MIF Board Member)

There is an indication here that, for some of those closely involved with MIF at least, the onus on the Festival to take responsibility for engaging with the wider Greater Manchester communities is of little relevance, and also that a lack of understanding that such engagement may be predicated on pre-existing levels of cultural capital is evident amongst the city's cultural elite. Linked to this, whilst commenting on the issues around ticket prices IV6 also claimed that MIF has "got its own niche, there's a place for our community festivals and there's a place for the International Festival" (IV6, MCC Employee), which is suggestive of how this lack of understanding of the relationship between ticket prices and accessibility comes about: there is not necessarily a commitment to MIF's engagement with the community at the level of its primary funders, who (as highlighted above) focus upon economic priorities first and foremost, with wider engagement as almost an added bonus. As we have seen in the previous chapters, through considering the Festival's alternative networks and the events that focus more upon local engagement and influence, MIF does not simply fit into the niche of the highly-regarded arts festival, yet through its programming it does sit in a position that may be seen as 'above' community arts practices. A level of commitment towards 'high art' is emphasised here – in this case, 'high art' aimed at those with existing levels of cultural capital, and also devised by those with high levels of cultural capital and the ability to influence how cultural value is portrayed within the city.

Previous chapters have shown than the work of MIF Creative forms a different part of the story, suggesting that cultural events such as MIF go beyond a neat summation of the economic, touristic and artistic facets of city re-imaging. Evidence has been presented, however, suggesting that this is a predominantly untold or obscured story, from the feelings of IV18, who suggested in Chapter 6 that despite knowing people involved in community food growing, access to *The Biospheric Project* seems limited, to IV17's admission in the following chapter that managing artistic integrity with community engagement in MIF Creative projects is "a really tricky balance". The story that can be told through the work of MIF Creative: that of a connection with local communities that does not fall under the economic or artistic outcome categories, is therefore much obscured, as one interviewee explained in terms of recruiting and engaging with private-sector partners:

"most people I speak to don't know anything about it [MIF Creative], it just passed them by […] they're like 'oh, really? Did you do that?' and MIF Creative in that sense is you know, it's hard to know how to pitch that, but it's got great stories to tell, and we're not telling it enough […] but it really helps if you can tie some of that in, and it's meaningful. And then they [private funders] feel, you know, that money has gone to other things, it's not just supporting arty farty people going to expensive opera!" (IV4, MIF Employee)

The under-selling of this more community-focused story likely contributes to the feeling for some that despite economic, touristic and artistic impact, MIF is lacking in impact for local communities more widely, with one interviewee suggesting that despite feeling conflicted due to their enjoyment of some MIF events, "I don't think it adds the big boost to the majority of people in the city that I would hope regeneration does", adding that "it doesn't feel like it really serves the city in any meaningful way" (IV18, Community Worker). This interviewee commented on an issue they faced in their day job – the sense of isolation prevalent amongst many local communities – and felt that those events that are a part of MIF could help combat this as "the kind of epiphanies you get from art and music are just astonishing, and actually they should be benefitting everyone, not just the people who know how to get tickets" (IV18, Community Worker).

Although IV18 had previously been unaware of much of the work of MIF Creative, these views serve to highlight a number of assumptions about MIF within a broader picture of culture-led regeneration. The preponderance of individuals within MIF who are highly connected to a network of cultural elites across the city dictates, to an extent, the prioritisation of certain elements of MIF when it comes to the wider representation of the Festival and the stories it has to tell, with those possessing a level of power through cultural and symbolic capital being most influential in terms of representing the city through its cultural events. Stories around MIF events that display high levels of cultural innovation appear prioritised, whilst the impact created through community involvement in MIF Creative or MIF Volunteers receives less attention in MIF publicity and in the descriptions of the Festival offered to me by interviewees. If we return to the 'brand values' of the city that Original Modern was based on (as articulated by IV13 on page 128, it appears here that the expression of Manchester's identity through MIF is more reflective of the value of ambition than those of 'live and let live' inclusivity.

It has been highlighted previously that there is a historical tendency for culture-led regeneration to assume less tangible benefits (Colomb, 2011; Connolly, 2013), and this is played out within the practices of MIF and the views of many involved with the

Festival, particularly through assumptions of trickle-down amongst the urban elite, whether through the presumptions made around ticket prices detailed above, or the lack of emphasis placed upon the potential benefits of the MIF Creative programme. These elements that represent the less tangible benefits of MIF are not sufficiently covered within Festival evaluations[33], and are seemingly given little credence by Council members and MIF board members (as seen in the comments from MCC interviewees in previous chapters).

An MIF Board Member stressed to me that "if it's good for the city it's good for them [the residents]. More people living in the city, it's creating more jobs, people needed to be waiters in restaurants or whatever, or do soundchecks" (IV5, MIF Board Member). This conforms to the MCC view of the primary positive outcome of cultural funding being that of boosting image and economy, with any other outcomes being subsidiary to this – not to mention the lack of consideration given to the fact that the kinds of jobs IV5 refers to are likely to be temporary or insecure, with, for example, zero hours contracts. There is a connection to be made here with the public sector's – and indeed urban regeneration policy's – view of culture, and the ongoing convergence of culture and economy in policy terms that has already been commented upon (Garcia, 2004a; Mommaas, 2004; Scott, 1997), with a resultant narrow conception of what 'cultural value' can be construed as. One interviewee was keen to stress this connection, and to question the public sector's understanding of culture as a result:

> "I think generally across the public sector [culture] is seen as, you know, men on stilts. As some irritating tax that they have to find money for from the public purse to entertain the masses, I think it's a kind of anachronism from the 18th Century, a leftover where actually the ruling class had to provide some entertainment for the working people. They didn't need it themselves, they came from a privileged, very highly culturalised elite in Britain. They had their own art collections and architecturally progressive homes. But they had to do something for the people" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

It is debateable whether contemporary local authority officers can be seen in the same way as the art collection-holding councillor of the past. Yet there is a suggestion here

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[33] The evaluations compiled by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester, 2008; Morris Hargreaves McIntyre 2012; 2013) are based on the following: Demographic profile, psychographic profile (risk-taking), previous attendance, awareness of and attendance at events, rating of events, impact of marketing and publicity, economic impact, response to brand messages, and open-ended responses regarding festival highlights and areas for improvement. Economic impact is the first topic covered in these evaluations, and MIF Creative and Volunteers are instead covered within separate documentation.

that despite cultural policy and cultural regeneration being cited as dominant tropes of 21st Century urban policy, the practices that emanate from such policy retain a common link with their historical counterparts such as Victorian beliefs in culture's benefits for society (Hunt, 2004), making greater claims to wide-ranging benefits yet not fully articulating these. Whilst on the part of MCC, the variety of comments above gives credence to this portrayal of a limited understanding of culture that is characterised by assumptions of trickle-down economic benefits, the case of MIF – and particularly the slow shifting of the Festival over time towards engagement with a wider public, led predominantly by MIF as a reaction to ongoing austerity and reflecting a position within the arts of widening depictions of cultural value – provides evidence of shifts in understanding that cannot be articulated through the existing language of cultural policy and civic boosterism favoured by the public sector.

Though the case of community and participatory arts is a different matter here, with its own history, elements of MIF's changes such as a focus on 'appropriateness' and 'inclusivity' and the ways that these are beginning to co-exist with the image of ambition and competition fostered by MCC's cultural strategy and articulated through MIF reflect the increasing attempts in policy literature (such as 2015's Warwick Commission report) to tie together these often disparate strands of value in a way that has not been done in the past.

The shift over time whereby those running MIF have felt a need to aim for the Festival to be considered 'more appropriate for our times' (as referenced in Chapter 7) resonates with the themes of inclusivity referenced in Chapter 6, where this trait is posited, in part through Original Modern, as a part of a Mancunian identity. This belief was espoused by numerous 'elites' I spoke to, with the speeches given by Alex Poots to MIF employees (through staff meetings) and wider audiences (for example the MIF13 programme launch (MIF, 2013d)) showing a real level of belief in MIF's ability to relate to wider audiences and reflect a landscape of austerity and uncertain cultural funding, as well as appeal to local communities. Yet this claim to inclusivity – or the 'brand value of respect' – is the least convincing element of Mancunian identity in the construction of Original Modern, with various other aspects of this identity sitting uncomfortably alongside it, not least the claims to enterprise and ambition.

An example of this can be seen within the official evaluations of MIF, where audiences have been asked the same questions across each iteration of the Festival. Despite observations undertaken during this research suggesting a shift towards a more inclusive

MIF over the years, when asked whether MIF13 was "designed for a select group of people in the know", 25% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (compared to 19% for MIF11, 24% for MIF09 and 25% for MIF07). Similar proportions of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Festival "passed ordinary Mancunians by" (27% for MIF13, 25% for MIF11, 29% for MIF09 and 34% for MIF07), showing that public perceptions of who MIF is for have not changed much over the years.

There is also disparity evident between an elitist position regarding the arts and the uncritical assumptions of trickle-down benefits, and the assertions made by Poots to both public and private audiences. In engaging with MIF throughout the run-up to MIF13, this drive of Poots' towards 'appropriateness' appeared to equate to a belief in the importance of arguing for and safeguarding the arts on the kinds of moral and societal grounds stressed by the likes of the RSA and ACE (2013): a reaction to ongoing funding cuts across the sector that had deepened since the development of MIF11, displaying some political differences with (and different conceptions of cultural value to) primary funders such as MCC who are unequivocal in their belief in arguing for the arts on economic grounds.

It seems as though this contradiction between elite arts and community benefit is, in part, what makes an event such as MIF appear as an elite project despite there being some evidence to the contrary, with the dominance of an elitist and economic story suggesting that MIF's incorporation into MCC's broader strategies may hinder the progress of the Festival in some respects, particularly in terms of the articulation of a broader idea of value. The underselling of the stories of MIF Creative perpetuates an elitist image of the Festival rather than reflecting a wider story of impact and value (although it should be added that MIF Creative events account for a small percentage of the Festival's overall output, so quantitatively they are less likely to receive coverage). In Chapter 6, IV8 referred to Original Modern as "a fair and accurate reflection of our being". It is apparent through this exploration of the manifestation of Original Modern through MIF, and the ways in which this is presented to a wider world, that the "our" referred to here is potentially difficult to define, and that there is a level of comfort within the cultural elite with this label. The intention was clearly to suggest that Original Modern reflected the city's population (and shifts over time within MIF suggest that this intention sits within the Festival as well), that it embodies Manchester and its people, forming a city identity that stretches beyond branding or marketing. Yet, as with much

of the work and events of MIF, despite efforts made towards inclusivity the collective more accurately defined by this statement is that of the urban or cultural elite, those highly networked individuals possessing a level of cultural capital and symbolic power that imbues in them the perceived authority to make these claims on behalf of a wider unspoken population, claims related to a belief in the image of Manchester as the Original Modern city.

This discussion points towards the confused nature of definitions of Original Modern, and thus confusion around who MIF is for. The lack of understanding of methods of engaging communities in culture and the arts displayed by those at the top (particularly within MCC) appears to lead to less take-up of cultural events such as MIF at the local community level, with assumptions of benefit at the Festival-wide level obscuring much of the more subtle and nuanced work that goes on to engage communities through MIF Creative. Whilst economy, tourism, artistic integrity and community impact are all sought through MIF, it is the latter that is viewed as less important in part due to its near-omission from narratives around the Festival's success and its place within a wider, Council-led programme of city repositioning and urban branding. One interviewee suggested a method of combating this imbalance, expressing that MIF could consolidate its social impacts by not solely acting within its biennial timeframe. The feeling here was that "those 18 days [of MIF] are so powerful, it's almost like a kind of backwash after, you know what I mean?" A suggestion was thus made that if the Festival promoted ongoing activity in the periods in which MIF is not active, "it would become a bit more tidal, rather than volcanic. So it's like the volcano goes off, and it creates lots of spectacular fire and it changes the landscape, but then it solidifies" (IV7, Artist and MIF Collaborator).

Despite such suggestions, there is little to suggest that an event such as MIF could reach a point of being equally beneficial to the public sector, private sector, and local communities. For the most part, this is due to the different priorities of different actors as previously discussed (MCC's desire for economic impact and increased tourism, MIF's desire for artistic integrity and further reach and reputation, and the desire of a smaller faction of MIF for community benefit, for example through MIF Creative and the volunteering scheme), and the importance assessed to these priorities according to the relative power and capital of those who value them. As one interviewee stated, "obviously it's difficult for them [MCC] because lots of people want Manchester to be lots of different things. And those things aren't necessarily all possible" (IV7, Artist and

MIF Collaborator) – it seems unrealistic that one event could reflect all of these different visions of the city.

The tensions here are around the difficulty, or impossibility, of representing a city through one phrase, or one activity, or one series of events. One interviewee suggested that "For me, what's important is what people's belief is in Manchester" (IV13, Marketing Manchester Employee), relating this to MIF, Manchester Pride, or the Manchester Histories Festival; claiming the importance of a 'Manchester model' of such events rather than the specific content of these events. It could therefore be said that the support of culture within Manchester is related more to place-marketing and city branding – a veneer of belief in the city – rather than active place-making and the connotations of change and progress that this phrase conjures. It is this question of place-making versus place-marketing that is considered in the following section.

8.3 Cultural Events: Place-making or place-marketing?

We now turn to the question of whether events such as MIF can be considered part of an exercise in place-making (outlined in Chapter 4 as a process claimed to be favoured by policy-makers and politicians within urban regeneration in the 21st Century), or whether they are more connected with practices of place-marketing and branding as outlined in the consideration of city branding in Chapter 3. In Chapter 6 it was found that MCC and Marketing Manchester hold a firm belief in the power of city branding, and that they view Manchester's approach to this as being set apart from that of other cities. In addition to this, evidence presented in Chapter 7 suggests that through MIF (both its events and its practices), there is also a focus on marketing the city to an external audience. However, both comments from interviewees and findings from observations made whilst engaged with the Festival in numerous capacities (researcher, employee, volunteer) suggest there is a belief in MIF – and Manchester's cultural output more generally – that there is more to be seen here than a simple exercise in marketing the city to a wider audience.

Comments from interviewees suggest the existence of a belief that the utilisation and support of cultural events within the city equates to a broader process of urban regeneration and place-making, rather than simply an exercise in marketing and branding. This is seen when they assert that Manchester differs from other cities, with interviewees speaking favourably of Manchester in comparison to Edinburgh (whose city branding was critiqued by IV13), Birmingham (whose council's approach to

public/private partnership was questioned by IV4) and Newcastle (whose council have drastically cut their arts and cultural budget, as highlighted by IV5). Yet there is perhaps not much difference between this process of the utilisation of culture within urban regeneration that MCC have been practising since the 1990s and more widespread use of place-marketing strategies within cities across the UK and internationally (such as the place-marketing strategies highlighted by Garcia, 2004a and Ward, 1998, as commented on in Chapter 3).

It can be posited, therefore, that the originality of such practices is less to do with an approach that is distinctly different from that of other cities, and more connected with the attitudes and city identities connected to Original Modern discussed in Chapter 6, and a belief in the values behind Original Modern. As well as a commitment to boosterism, there is a belief in originality here, and an understanding of the power of coherent, ongoing narratives. This drives such activities even though these do not differ greatly from the practices of numerous other cities. Questions around originality can then be raised in the consideration of whether Manchester's strategies are more closely aligned with place-making or place-marketing. In the process of this questioning, the idea of a city identity is returned to, allowing exploration of the belief in place-making that seems to be expressed by many of the city's urban and cultural elites. It is posited that this belief could be viewed as a result of a real or imagined city identity, at least in the eyes of those who hold these beliefs, and that Manchester's perceived history of self-assertion contributes to this and thus the claims of original practice and policy.

8.3.1 Policy and Branding in the City

There are a number of connections between literature on cultural policy and urban branding and the findings outlined in previous chapters, including strength of conviction within MCC of the importance of culture in projections of Manchester's image. Manchester is positioned here as an example of the ways in which urban planners and policy makers have embraced a shift from the planned to the branded city in the early stages of the 21st Century, with questions arising around the belief in the city's originality. In MCC's cultural strategy of 2002, it is stated that "Manchester is a city with great cultural strengths and we need to build on our achievements in order to raise the profile of the city as a creative capital, increase opportunities for residents and to contribute to the city's economic prosperity" (MCC, 2002: 3). Along with the empirical evidence discussed above and in previous chapters, there is very much a suggestion within this strategy of culture as tool within the context of Manchester.

It is clear, however, that through events such as MIF, the desired outcomes of this cultural strategy are not in balance with one another, with increased opportunities for residents sitting below the more economically focused imperatives that lie at the forefront of MCC's activities and aims (though it should be added that MCC's belief in the trickle-down benefits of economic strategy suggest a benefit for residents). It was commented upon in Chapter 2 that Peck and Ward viewed MCC's support of cultural and sporting events within Manchester as "political theatre" (2002: 6-7) and that in the 1980s, Robson (1988) expressed concern that urban renewal exercises prioritise areas of the city that display economic potential, with the case of MIF appearing to support these claims.

It seems that the cultural policy relevance of MIF, rather than conforming to MCC's broad-reaching cultural strategy, is more akin to Frith's (1991) typology of contemporary urban policy, in which industrial, tourist and cosmetic cultural policies are outlined. However, Frith's suggestion appears to be that these three cultural policies are relatively distinct forms, yet an event such as MIF can be seen as an example of all three types as it produces goods – in the form of its events – for consumption (industrial policy), values 'imported' consumers of cultural experience (tourist policy), and uses its events to make the city attractive to investors (cosmetic policy). As seen above in the imbalance in MIF's goals and the comparative imbalance in the desired outcomes of MCC's broader cultural strategy, these policy forms focus largely on the appearance of the city to external viewers, visitors, and potential investors.

In order to distance the city from past negative connotations of deindustrialisation and decline, 'originality' is used as a means of shifting perceptions via the brand ethos of Original Modern, with MIF as a key tool within this. The commitment of those with a level of control over the city's projected image and associated fortunes (MCC, Marketing Manchester *et al*) to efforts in branding can be seen from the fact that MCC saw fit to employ a Creative Director of the city in Saville – an employment position not often found within a city council. The establishment of this position shows a belief in the importance of image on the part of MCC, emblematic of a shift away from traditional urban policy and towards the world of branding and marketing. Fessler Vaz & Berenstein Jacques (2006) suggest that in cultural policy, the visibility of a brand equates to its success. However, in the case of Original Modern (which, as discussed in Chapter 6, was designed to be an 'ethos' rather than a 'strapline', recognisable through its manifestations and actions such as MIF rather than using the phrase itself to 'brand'

the city), the phrase itself is not widely used within the city, with MIF being the most visible manifestation of this ethos yet only using the phrase within a small amount of Festival publicity and documentation.

Instead, it appears that the *belief* in Manchester's originality could be its marker of brand success, a belief evident within the assertions of the urban cultural elite that Manchester is an "originator rather than an imitator" (IV5), and the feeling expressed that the live stream of Elbow's MIF09 performance at Castlefield constituted a "Manchester moment" (IV13). Yet for all the belief in originality and place-specificity expressed by these elites, there is scant evidence that Manchester's cultural strategies and associated events differ greatly from those of other cities. Therefore it can be suggested that this is place-marketing, not place-making, or a process of urban regeneration concerned more with image repositioning than with proposing and actualising changes that impact on wider city communities. Or, in other words, an outward-focused marketing exercise rather than an inward-focused effort at place-making that supports the assertion above that overall, MIF is an elite project reinforcing certain images of the city.

8.3.2 Place-making, or place-marketing?

The question of whether culture-led regeneration activities are more closely allied with holistic place-making or branding and tourism-focused place-marketing has been key in the understanding of MIF and its role in the creation and perpetuation of a particular image of Manchester. In the literature that was explored in Chapter 3, it was shown that ideas of place-marketing are dominant within contemporary urban narratives, with place-making being a harder concept to pin down or find evidence of. In accordance with this, the way in which Manchester's promotion through the Original Modern ethos and events such as MIF is executed suggests a commitment to place-marketing and a belief in trickle-down, and yet a belief in the widespread benefits of such strategies and activities potentially displays a push towards deeper place-making. However, prior to this there have been assertions that Manchester's contemporary development involves a displacement of "underlying social and economic problems" (Peck and Ward, 2002: 5), resonating with the 'sanitised streets' warned of by Minton (2009).

MIF, in its role as a kind of ambassador of the capabilities of the city, is emblematic of a shift in perceptions of Manchester that could be claimed to be evidence of both place-marketing and deeper place-making. This was shown in Chapter 6, where MIF was positioned by some as enhancing Manchester's reputation through contributing to a

previously lacking art and culture scene (IV2; IV5), whilst others spoke of the MIF Creative programme and events such as *The Biospheric Project* as helping "subtly change your recognition and your perception of what's happening in the city" (IV17, MIF Employee). Yet, despite attempts to link this process of repositioning with a trajectory over centuries of invention, originality and radicalism (through Original Modern), some interviewees acknowledged that events such as MIF are as much about repositioning Manchester through assigning the city a new role as they are about reflecting perceived historical traits of the city. In exploring this, one MIF employee stated that "I see my role […] as educating people who have a very set opinion of a Manchester that doesn't exist anymore" (IV10, MIF Employee), with one of the Festival's past artists concurring, suggesting that:

> "you only have to look as far back as when Cracker was filmed in the 80s, it was grim! It looked grim, it was dirty, it was dangerous, you know? And I remember it feeling like that, I remember it being like that. And it doesn't feel like that now, you know, it is a different place to be. And the Festival and the way it's run is a fantastic part of it" (IV16, MIF Artist)

This shift is therefore positioned as a positive progression of the city, with IV16 seeing events such as MIF and Pride as showing that "that's not the dirty old mill town I grew up in, that's not the sort of smoke stacks and the grimness, you know, that's, we are a modern, beautiful, romantic place to come and do your thing" (IV16, MIF Artist). These individuals, through a level of passion for the arts and the work of MIF, appear to express a belief in the transformational capabilities of art and culture and the role that this can play in changing people's perceptions of a city, in making a city a better place to be, positioning such activities as being more than instrumental in city branding. Instead, art and culture are seen here as a valued part of what makes up a place.

Conversely, there is an argument that MIF's limitations, as previously outlined through imbalances in its outcomes, position it as an element of place-marketing or branding rather than of a broader claim to place-making, or rather that it contributes to place-making in a way that ignores elements of place that the lesser-known areas of the Festival, such as MIF Creative, focus upon. This conforms to Peck and Ward's suggestion of the "political theatre" of MCC's support of sports and culture, whereby such events are held up as examples of the city's prowess with little attention paid to the impacts they can have on local communities. From a clear statement that "the Manchester International Festival is not representative of Manchester. It's just not, without a doubt" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator), to the suggestion that "I think

what it [MIF] says about Manchester is people that make decisions are much more interested in looking flashy than they are about telling the city's story really" (IV18, Community Worker), there is a level of cynicism around MIF's impacts, whereby those engaged with a wider cultural or community arena within the city (i.e. those positioned at least partially outside of this urban cultural elite) problematise the Festival's activities in a way that those within this elite do not, questioning whether arts events such as those within MIF have a wider value beyond the kind of 'theatre' that Peck and Ward highlight.

These differing opinions from those within MIF and MCC and those positioned with more of an outsider view highlight a number of problems with this council-led shift towards city branding and marketing that can be articulated through these subtle differences between place-making and place-marketing. In particular the story told by the level of support of certain events – and the prioritisation of particular narratives within these events – may resonate with a national or international audience, but it can be less convincing to those living within the city being represented. As one interviewee asserted, "it's a tricky line to tread, rebranding a city, because certain things of Manchester's rebranding, certain elements of it can be distressing sometimes, […] things like venues being under threat of closure because of noise complaints[34]. […] you sometimes get this very 'clear the decks' [attitude]" (IV16, MIF Artist). Whilst this comment did not refer to an MIF event, it is emblematic of the kinds of issues that can arise from the shifts in perception that come with re-branding a city and advertising it through its arts and cultural events (or, rather, advertising it through a specific kind of event that has been ascribed cultural value by those with power over such processes). The kind of sanitised culture presented through the highly marketed city can be seen as attracting tourism and thus obscuring some of the pre-existing cultural activity that helped to culturally position the city in the first instance (Millie, 2008; Minton, 2009), as well as the problematic or contested nature of the post-industrial city still facing issues of deprivation or decline.

Likewise, despite the efforts of MIF to engage with the wider Greater Manchester community through its MIF Creative and Volunteering programmes (as discussed in Chapter 6), MCC's support of MIF is characteristic of urban regeneration's focus on city centres (Robson, 1988). An MIF collaborator informed me that "another one of my

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[34] It should be explained that this particular example is not connected with MIF, but with the ongoing threats of closure issued to the Night and Day Café, a music venue within Manchester's Northern Quarter.

bugbears [is that] Marketing Manchester who are an important player in all this, and CityCo[35], and all those kind of organisations, they are very much about the city centre", adding that experience of cultural activity in the city's suburbs left this interviewee frustrated that "there's no official or established way of energising that or bringing it together really, it's all very piecemeal" (IV7, Artist and MIF Collaborator).

Given MIF's city centre focus, the shifts in perception that prioritise the extraordinary or the spectacular (Hannigan, 1998; Zukin, 1995), and the seeming prioritisation of economic and touristic outcomes, MCC's use of culture through MIF supports Cox and O'Brien's (2012) assertion (made with reference to Liverpool) that culture-led regeneration is tantamount to a form of gentrification where activity is primarily focused upon attracting a creative class (Florida, 2002). But as we have seen through the comments made by a number of individuals highly connected with the processes of city repositioning through the means of cultural events, there is a level of belief in broader claims to place-making as opposed to an exercise purely in place-marketing, with this belief proving infectious during my time working within MIF, though less convincing with the distance (both geographical and temporal) gained from leaving the field of research. This belief in place-making, or holistic regeneration achieved in part through cultural events, is discussed further below, arguing that in the case of Manchester and MIF, a belief in the city's originality is more evident than concrete examples of the existence of this originality. This belief in the city's originality is key to the articulation of place, evidencing the importance of willing a particular vision of the city into being in part through the organisational identity of MIF, and suggesting that a city identity can be a more deeply held belief than simple rebranding associated with many urban regeneration exercises.

8.3.3 Belief in place-making

There is evidence to suggest that MIF, and MCC's support of culture more generally, is an example of place-marketing and city branding as opposed to a broader landscape of place-making. Yet it is apparent that those within these organisations who are involved in these practices remain convinced of an added level of significance of events such as MIF that is more connected with place-making. There are echoes here of the kind of constructed Mancunian identity that was explored in Chapter 6, of the self-belief that

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[35] CityCo is a 'city centre management' company in Manchester that claims to be "helping to make Manchester a clean, attractive and welcoming city", with a network of over 100 local businesses including many from the creative industries. They also host or co-ordinate many events across the city centre with the explicit aim to "drive ABC1 audiences into the city centre" (CityCo, 2015)

seems ever-present within the city (or at least the city's (cultural) elites) and played out within the practices and events of MIF as detailed in Chapter 7. This was evident within the opinions of various interviewees, with one, when asked why MIF exists in Manchester and not elsewhere, suggesting that "there's bound to be cities where they could do this, and they haven't done it. And so, we've done it and that's original, and it can never be original again. Sure, cities can do it, but it's us that did it" (IV2, MIF Employee).

Haslam (2000) relates Manchester's self-assertion all the way back to the Chartists and the beginnings of trade unionism, and whilst these direct links between activism and self assertion are not necessarily directly comparable, it can be suggested that a belief in this history of 'making things happen' is evident within MIF and its commission of new works, channelling this perceived trait from its radical beginnings to a contemporary neoliberal setting. Various perspectives presented in Chapter 6 reflect this, from IV9's claim that "Manchester will have a central part in creating the modern world we will know in the future", to IV17's description of an MIF attitude of "we're gonna do it our way and this is how we want to make change happen" which they linked to the "character of the city", and the references made to the "can-do", ambitious city by IV1, IV4, IV15 and IV17. All of these individuals take historical traits or actions that have been present within Manchester and use them to construct a contemporary identity that appears both powerful and individual, using relatively small scale examples such as MIF in an attempt to evidence a wider city identity.

There is a feeling articulated by interviewees that MIF is a clear part of the city's trajectory, in which the 'city of firsts' stretched from the Industrial Revolution to contemporary advances in science and the arts, and that the connection to this trajectory gives an event such as MIF a greater level of significance when it comes to representing the city. An employee of Marketing Manchester summed this up as a kind of alchemy between people and place, saying:

> "I think in the telling of the Manchester story there is that odd thing about the almost intangible thing about Manchester which is something odd that happens between people and places, when they're matched up and they create amazing things, and that might be scientists coming into the university and discovering new things like graphene, it might be artists coming to Manchester, being given an unusual space and then making amazing you know programmes of work as a result, […] what Alex [Poots] hit on really was that thing about bringing the best people from all over the world, to the place we believe in and let

them interact with that place in order to come up with you know, whatever it is that they want to come up with, and that in itself will tell the story of Manchester" (IV14, Marketing Manchester Employee)

The key point here is the reference at the end of IV14's comment to "the place we believe in", which again returns to the 'can-do' city. It is a belief that Manchester is both original and significant, that "if the MIF is special it says something about Manchester being special" (IV9, MCC Employee), that "you don't wanna be in boring places where all they do is moan, you wanna be in 'can-do' places, […] where the city constantly works together to reinvent itself day by day, week by week, year by year, and that's what Manchester's about" (IV8, MCC Employee). One MCC employee related this belief in the city to a broader idea of city character, suggesting that cities possessed a particular 'psychology':

> "something that I think is very, very important, […] is the psychology of cities. And, you know, we can view cities in all sorts of ways, but cities are fundamentally the people who live and work and play in them so – the buildings have a role, they support all of that – but if you start looking at all of that, cities are organic. And if you think of cities in an organic way you start thinking about how cities do have a particular psychology and I think the cities that are positive, that are self-confident, that believe they can do, that they can do and can achieve, will do and will achieve. And the Festival also has a role in building that sort of sense of the city as a place that does interesting and exciting things" (IV9, MCC Employee).

Whilst it is questionable whether a city can have a collective psychology – just as it is questionable whether a city as a whole can embody a particular identity (as explored in the discussion around habitus and city identity in Chapter 4) – in using this concept IV9 – perhaps unintentionally – highlighted a key point around the construction of a Manchester identity, or a Manchester way of doing things. Essentially, what is being suggested here – although not explicitly – is that, in fact, it is not Manchester's originality that is key to the city's success. It is not strictly that MIF does what other urban festivals do not – or cannot – do, or that MCC's strategies differ greatly from that of other cities: it's the importance of believing this to be the case, and thus willing the Original Modern city into being as a form of city identity.

There is a case here of reproduced stories, of Hannigan's Fantasy City (1998), Van Ulzen's illusory Rotterdam (2007) or Davis' envisioned LA (1991). Returning to the framework upon which this research has been based, there is then a question of whether

this ongoing replication of traits may equate to a kind of urban identity. Although we can consider Lee's (1997) idea of a city habitus here, and comment that Bourdieu's (2010) suggestion that the reproduction of habitus involves an unconscious 'alchemy' within individuals relates to the connection between people and place that research participants attempted to articulate, it seems more appropriate here (as discussed in Chapter 4) to view this as the manifestation of (or belief in) a city identity rather than a habitus.

The relatively replicable suggestions of Mancunian identity (the 'can-do' originality), and the way in which members of this cultural elite embody this identity through their actions (for example a belief in the importance and superiority of the likes of MIF), may be understood through the lens of Bourdieu's definition of habitus as "a set of *acquired* characteristics which are the product of social conditions" (2002: 29). Lee's suggestion, however, goes beyond this, implying that beyond this alchemy within individuals there is a similar process within place itself. This was reflected in the way in which many interviewees spoke of the city, suggesting a belief in long-lasting and durable characteristics which could be claimed to be tantamount to a habitus. However, as Jenkins has queried, "how, if at all, is it possible for a field to 'have' its own habitus, if the habitus is a property of embodied, individual agents?" (2002: 90). Instead, it appears that there is a case here of those individuals displaying a belief in a city identity (that is constructed in part by Manchester's urban cultural elite), perhaps underpinned by a desire to have a wider audience perceive their work as valuable (though it is debatable whether this would be recognisable outside of close connection with the Festival).

Is this then manifest in an unconscious drive of the city's urban elite to promote particular visions of the city? Whilst the branding exercises and the development of Original Modern have been conscious efforts on the part of decision-makers such as those within MCC and Marketing Manchester, the way in which the aforementioned interviewees comment on the character of the city and its inhabitants as though this were a natural phenomena does suggest that an amount of this push towards representing the city in a certain way is unconscious, or at least unquestioned within the minds of these individuals. The comments of various interviewees, along with printed materials related to both MIF and Original Modern, suggest that there is a collective belief in the existence of identity traits evident within Manchester's residents (or at least within those who are connected to an urban cultural elite, and thus possess a level of power), made manifest within events and activities within the city that contribute to

contemporary urban regeneration. They are by no means representative of an entire urban population, or of all cultural activity within the city, and yet they appear both powerful and enduring.

The readiness with which those connected with MIF would speak of originality, of the pioneering city, of the city of firsts appeared not to be a conscious effort to use this type of language; instead this seemed to be a natural and plausible way of considering Manchester's character. In embodying this set of views and values, the urban cultural elite are (re)producing a narrative of the city that is focused very much on presenting an image of success to a wider public – much in the way that place branding and marketing do – rather than addressing the kinds of issues that broader place-making or regeneration activities could tackle. The fact that this was seemingly unconscious, along with the replicability of these opinions across a number of individuals, makes the idea of a city identity appear persuasive, more so than using Lee's idea of city habitus. Original Modern is thus portrayed here as an illusory form constructed by these individuals and portrayed via the likes of MIF. This particular representation articulated through MIF is emblematic of wider exercises in place-marketing, where the original and pioneering city is positioned as a dominant representation that many believe to have significance beyond that of marketing. From this we can posit that MIF sits between the elements of place-marketing and ethos, or marketing activity that makes claims to deeper place-making without being fully convincing in this area.

8.4 Conclusions

In setting out the background of this research in the literature explored in Chapter 3, suggestions were made that the chosen representations of cities as supported by cultural elites could be seen to have more impact on tourists and investors than on the local community, suggesting that the image favoured through these representations tends to be one that improves a city's competitive and economic position (see for example Evans, 2006; Griffiths *et al*, 2003). The evidence gained through close examination of MIF suggests that this desire for outward-facing impact is indeed sought – and, to some extent, successfully gained – in the case of Manchester. But the discussion above offers a more nuanced understanding of what is often painted as a simple story of culture-as-tool within councils' urban policy strategies, suggesting that whilst other impacts are underplayed, they are certainly in evidence.

It has thus been argued here that whilst the 'culture-as-tool' view of urban policy and urban regeneration can be supported through exploration of MIF, what is of greater interest is the way in which the position of those with relative power and high levels of cultural capital affects the positioning of the city through the dominance of particular representations of the urban. How this positioning comes to reflect the priorities of some individuals (those focused upon economic and touristic imperatives) above others (those prioritising community involvement and, to a lesser extent, art for art's sake), then feeds into contemporary discourses surrounding the worth or value of culture. Additionally, this chapter has questioned whether MIF can be seen as more aligned with place-marketing or place-making activity, and whilst a definitive answer to this is difficult to reach, comments from interviewees and observations made throughout the research have suggested a belief in place-making. This is of importance in part in understanding the motivations behind the choices made by those with a level of power over cultural activity within the city, but also in further understanding the value placed upon culture in the city. In the following, final chapter, these questions of value will be discussed further, before summarising the findings and implications of the research presented throughout.

9 Recommendations and Implications

We turn now to the overall recommendations that have emerged from this research, and the implications for further research, policy and practice. Throughout this research a number of points have been made about the ways in which culture is utilised within cities, and how cultural events contribute to representations of the city that are created, in part, by elite networks of cultural and civic actors. These findings are addressed below in terms of their relation to the original research questions presented in Chapter 1, before the research contributions are discussed in terms of the relation to the field of culture and urban regeneration – both in literature and in methods. Beyond this, a number of implications are discussed, suggesting ways in which the research presented here can contribute to policy and practice within culture and urban regeneration. Finally, some overall reflections are presented in keeping with the reflexive nature that has been part of this ethnographic study, along with suggestions for further research that may be undertaken in the area. This and other contributions of the work presented here are discussed, from the benefits of applying theories of power and capital to a field primarily occupied by studies more focused upon policy, to the value added to the field of urban regeneration through the utilisation of ethnographic techniques.

9. 1 Cultural Value and the Utilisation of Culture

In the following discussion, the reproduction of urban narratives that can be seen through dominant representations as outlined in previous chapters is considered in terms of its impact on the question of cultural value first discussed in Chapter 1, connecting the themes explored up to this point with a wider consideration of cultural policy within the UK as a whole. Questions are then asked about whether culture can therefore be better utilised within this post-regeneration urban landscape and its focus on city branding, with attention also being paid to the limitations of culture in this context, despite its perceived "multitude of benefits" such as culture and creativity, from the attraction of a creative class to the ability to tackle social exclusion (Connolly, 2013: 168).

9.1.1 Reproducing stereotypes and the impact on cultural value

In framing a city's utilisation of culture through a lens of culture-led regeneration, there is a danger that such activity's multiplicity of impacts is not reflected, thus reproducing stereotypical, or dominant, representations of the urban. This research confirms the assertions in past literature that urban regeneration and cultural policy predominantly

views culture as a tool for tourism and investment (Evans, 2009; Griffiths *et al*, 2003), but also uncovers (lesser-stated) beliefs in some of the other goals associated with cultural events. The evidence from this research suggests that this focus on culture-as-regeneration perpetuated by MCC as major funders of MIF and other cultural initiatives in Manchester clouds alternative stories of impact and value even for those for whom the arts have a broader field of importance (whilst still allowing space for these alternative impacts to exist). Hence, despite many MIF employees' beliefs that the cultural events presented by the Festival can have significant impact on those individuals who become involved in them, this narrative is predominantly anecdotal, not widely distributed and is therefore afforded a lesser position in the wider story of cultural value within the city.

As major cultural funders with an ongoing seemingly stable position of power (as discussed in Chapter 6), the Labour administration of MCC are imbued with a certain level of power to name that which is of cultural value or significance, afforded by the amount of symbolic power and capital held by those in a position to dictate cultural policy or strategy within the city. This then serves to reproduce a particular narrative of the city in which Manchester is positioned as both innovative and original, and also predominantly – though not solely – concerned with projecting an image of success to an outside world as opposed to focusing upon the understandings of the city displayed by local communities.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, we can compare Manchester to Van Ulzen's Rotterdam, whereby the city is seen as "an illusion that is deceptively real and cherished by millions of people" (2007: 11). Myth-making is viewed here as an important facet of reality, and in the case of Manchester, MIF is one of many events or institutions that contributes to this construction of a 'reality' of the successful city, which has incorporated specific points of the city's history through the ethos of Original Modern. The purpose of this research is not to suggest that MCC are misguided in their support of events such as MIF, nor to undermine the economic impacts that such an event brings to the city. But the continued reproduction of this image of an outward-facing, competitive city, as per the examples seen in the literature from Glasgow (Booth and Boyle, 1993) to Barcelona (Degen and Garcia, 2012), serves to shore up a narrow or unbalanced view of the city, as well as a limited tale of cultural value, in which both MIF and Manchester are presented as examples of the success of the neoliberal city whilst failing to address not only its various shortcomings, but also the narratives of the city

that do not fit its priorities. Whilst MIF contributes to the city in numerous ways, by valuing its monetary (or, more broadly, inward-investment) contribution above the other contributions discussed here MCC is giving a message that this gaze towards inward-investment is to be prioritised over support of culture and the arts for the benefit of pre-existing communities, or indeed for 'art's sake'. As one artist explained:

> "it's sad to have to do it in terms of economy, because that's not the spiritual home of art. You know, it's not meant to do that, it's not designed for that. And if it becomes simply a part of that process, the art will suffer as a result because it will start to be tailored, and more machine-made. So yeah, it's important to argue the moral stance of protecting the arts financially, which is that it enriches people's lives, and therefore improves them" (IV16, MIF Artist)

Whilst it is debatable that economy has not traditionally been associated with art, it is this moral stance that appears evident amongst MIF employees, and seen through MIF Creative and its "commitment to the local community" (Manchester International Festival, 2009: 34). Yet this is lacking in the wider representation of MIF seen through the lens of the Original Modern ethos, where image is presented at the forefront of Manchester's supposed identity, neglecting even those elements that apparently form a part of this ethos, those of being welcoming, inclusive, accepting: the "brand value of respect" that IV13 spoke of in Chapter 6. In turn this contributes to a skewed view of cultural value that does not represent the multifaceted impacts of culture and the arts, an issue currently being questioned across the UK and beyond in times of ongoing austerity, and a continued fight to protect what remains of arts funding and question how this worth is measured and articulated. A key focus of this debate has been around questioning the need for continued proof of the economic value of culture and the arts – as this appears clear across Europe (Garcia, 2004a) – and attempting to bring other articulations of value to the forefront, particularly those around wellbeing (ACE, 2013; RSA and ACE, 2013), with groups such as the What Next? campaigns running nationwide (as mentioned on page 31) focusing on furthering these debates and bringing them to a wider audience.

The evidence uncovered through this case study ties into this contemporary discussion around the support of culture and the arts in the UK, with a considerable amount of the disconnect uncovered in Chapters 6 and 7 being between articulating the importance of the arts to those who already believe in its value (whether the intrinsic value seen by those working within the arts or the more extrinsic values noted by local government),

and creating value for those outside this bubble. It is not a given that a greater success in articulating this variety of values and impacts would affect the events and everyday practices associated with an organisation such as MIF. But there is no denying that cultural events, and the support they are offered by local authorities, are part of a broader political landscape in which the future of the arts and any associated patronage they receive is being affected by the ways in which such value is articulated, as well as the ways in which it is measured.

There are questions around the compatibility of these two facets, and the case of MIF suggests that even when cultural events can 'prove' their value on both sides of this coin, these values are not necessarily given even weighting in terms of the narrative presented to a wider public. It should be considered, therefore, whether the alternative networks spoken of in this work (those of MIF Creative and MIF Volunteering) shore up an existing understanding of cultural value as the valuing of what is traditionally understood to be 'high' culture (or at least that their potential in terms of creating fractures within this hegemony has not yet been realised), in that their focus may be the broader impacts of cultural events on society, yet these impacts are then not articulated to an extended audience.

It can thus be seen that there are a number of different views of the arts on the part of different groups or organisations – even within different parts of these organisations, as is the case with MIF Creative and MIF Volunteers as opposed to the Festival as a whole – and that those with a greater level of power confirm dominant narratives by the consistent retelling of stories of success. In addition to this, there are issues around the relationship between arts organisations and local authorities due to the unease that can come from (partial) reliance on public funding, and the pressure that this may have on creative processes. In the case of MIF, this is perhaps why a number of interviewees were keen to insist that they did not feel beholden to MCC, such as IV10's comments on trust in Chapter 7, which they then elaborated upon in saying:

> "I feel really enormously supported by them [MCC], but I also feel like we support them. Because I'm from a very private sector mentality, I'm not like forever grateful, […] I love working with them, they're extraordinary, but they're also equally lucky to have a festival like this one in their city because Birmingham, London, Leeds, Brighton, would cut their right arm off to have it" (IV10, MIF Employee)

Alongside evidence, once again, of the level of confidence that is said to be part of this Mancunian or Original Modern identity, this comment also offers insight into the way in which culture is viewed within the city through its reference to the private sector. As was commented upon in Chapter 6, MCC, whilst being a Labour administration, is an authority that has embraced elements of neoliberalism such as public/private sector partnerships, and alongside this has been an increasing focus on the monetisation of areas such as culture and the arts: a factor that MIF employees such as IV10 seem to have a significant awareness of, hence the prioritisation of the more marketable success stories. What, then, of arts and culture that do not fit this mould of clear ability to deliver in monetary and touristic or inwards investment terms? One interviewee referred to some anecdotal evidence to stress this point and shed light on the way that councils and other officials view culture and the arts:

> "somebody attended a meeting about marketing in Manchester, and it was, what about the musicians, what about the people who make the music that makes people come to the city; [and the answer was] 'they'll always find a way, it's good to put them in a less developed area because they'll actually draw people to it and it will become developed, it's known as composting'. They actually have that phrase for it. So the arts is always kicked around" (IV16, MIF Artist)

Once again we return here to the view of culture as tool, with councils stressing economic and development benefits that could be viewed as processes of gentrification, thus enforcing upon arts institutions a need to justify their existence in line with these ideals, leaving other impacts not only under-studied, but undervalued. If certain elements are undervalued by those with the power and the purse-strings, it is then hard to articulate that value to wider audiences, with this reinforcement of dominant narratives co-opting brash, heavily marketed success-stories. It seems, then, that if culture plays a role in creating a distinct city image, it can be better utilised, and that there is a case here for balancing the 'envisioned city' of branding and marketing with more concrete evidence such as that of economic impact, along with the less tangible benefits highlighted throughout this research. These opportunities, as well as the associated limitations of the use of culture within cities, are explored below.

9.1.2 Better utilising culture: opportunities and limitations

This study has taken culture with a capital C (after Duncombe, 2007; and also Williams, 1961) to be its primary focus, and in investigating a city's utilisation of cultural events through this lens it has become apparent that through MIF, Manchester itself (or at least

those with a level of control over how culture is supported and viewed within the city) is shown to be more concerned with this capital C culture than its lower-case counterpart: that of a way of life (Duncombe, 2007; Eagleton, 2000; Williams, 1961). Yet it appears through the ethos of Original Modern that such culture is intended to represent the city in a manner that involves attempts to represent an enduring way of life of the city. There is an opportunity here to suggest that processes of city envisioning or myth-making such as that embarked upon by MCC should pay greater heed to this conceptualisation of culture as way of life, perhaps using it as a starting point rather than beginning from a set of art forms presented for an external audience. Perhaps a representation of the urban through its cultural forms would be more reflective of the range of roles that cultural events can play and the variety of impacts that they can have on their locales. There is, of course, a great deal of complexity where the positioning or marketing of a city is concerned, with one interviewee viewing it as "like a clock", further explaining this assertion by suggesting that:

> "From one side it's really simple and you think you know what it is, but when you turn it around and take the back off? Ah. Hmm, I'm not sure what I'm looking at. Are the big things important, are the little things… you know, it really does take quite a long time to actually get a grasp of this complex mechanism of place" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

Reflecting the metaphor used here, it can be suggested that from the evidence presented within this research, MCC shows itself (in its support and views of cultural events within the city) to be primarily concerned with the importance of the 'big things' in the mechanism of city image: the bold claims, the success stories, the image presented to the world, rather than careful consideration of those 'little things', or the individuals and minutiae of activity that make up a city. In discussing this further, this same interviewee felt that despite the complexity involved, a conceptualisation of the city could account for these differing levels, referring to a radio documentary about Marseilles in which it was posited that "the culture of a place is a manifestation of the values of its people, of its society" (IV20, Artist and MIF Collaborator). This shows a level of consideration for the concept of culture as society that does not appear to be reflected within the policies and strategies of MCC, as despite the Council's support of a wide range of activities and initiatives within the city, those that appear to benefit from the greatest level of support are not necessarily concerned with these societal values. This seems a neat summing up of culture's role within cities, and the way in which these cities are then presented to the world, and yet an example such as MIF and its presentation to a wider world reveals

that it is perhaps more accurate to say that the culture – or at least the dominant or most advertised culture – of a place is the manifestation of the values of its elites.

Given this picture of culture – or at least culture as supported by local authorities – as a manifestation of the concerns of an urban minority, it can then be questioned whether culture is afforded too much weight in urban policy. Is the weight given to culture within urban policy terms in need of redistribution to not only reflect the wider range of roles that it can play, but incorporate a wider range of cultural activity? The existence of the alternative networks discussed in Chapter 6 shows that the wider range of roles that culture can play is evidenced within MIF, thus it is not the case that social or community impact needs to be created, more that it needs to be better articulated, or strengthened. In order for this to happen, however, the weight of prioritisation of MIF's values and impacts would need to shift, both within the Festival and within MCC as a primary funder, with impacts such as those created by local participation in MIF Creative commissions, or the benefits gained by those who volunteer with the Festival, offered a platform from which they could be noted and understood by wider audiences. Not only would this prove beneficial in terms of the ongoing promotion of both MIF Creative and MIF Volunteers within the MIF framework, it would also serve to answer questions that may be asked by the public of how MCC's support of MIF benefits the city and its residents, as well as lending weight to nationwide debate of the multifaceted impacts and value of cultural events.

Conversely, however, there is little evidence to suggest that the support of culture as a facet of urban regeneration should be able to solve a city's multitude of ills – as one interviewee commented, "you'd have to have quite a distorted view of the world to say you know, MIF happens every two years and yet there are still loads of shops boarded up in Burnage[36]" (IV7, Artist and MIF Collaborator). However, given the financial support that MCC provides MIF, these limitations are bound to have an effect on public opinion of culture-led regeneration or urban policy. The same interviewee went on to comment that "the reason I blow hot and cold about cultural regeneration is because I don't know whether the communities and the people who would benefit most from regeneration are in the same solar system as that kind of cultural activity" (IV7, Artist and MIF Collaborator), articulating the disparity between local authorities' views on such activity and their own ideas:

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[36] Whilst Burnage is an area of mixed fortunes, it will have been used here as an example of a comparatively deprived area of the city (seven of Burnage's nine LSOAs were in the top 20% of the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation).

> "my thing about cultural regeneration is that so often it's translated as 'give people opportunities to buy tickets for things', whereas my idea of cultural regeneration is 'give people an opportunity to create or produce, or make their own culture'. That's cultural regeneration to me. But it's moved away, when I sit in council-type meetings, because I do like to go to these things to try and work out what the hell's going on in the world, and it was about, there was somebody giving a presentation to the great and the good about the importance of creative industries in Manchester. And one of their examples was Marks & Spencer" (IV7, Artist and MIF Collaborator)

Issues such as those of 'access' equating to cheaper ticket prices, as discussed above, and loose, Floridian conceptualisations of the creative industries such as the example IV7 gives here connect not only to questions of the use of culture within urban regeneration, but are emblematic of broader tensions within Manchester, where branding and marketing for the purposes of inward investment rarely offer community benefit beyond the presumptuous assertions of 'trickle-down'. Claims of 'increased employment opportunities' are not scrutinised in terms of who those opportunities reach, and claims of the positive impact of arts and culture on wellbeing remain elusive in their measurement. This difficulty and complexity only serves to reinforce the particular conceptions of the urban that are (re)produced by the city's elites, where shared meanings are supported and believed but predominantly by those who make up a narrow segment of the city's population, as shown through the exploration and observation of networks of urban cultural elites within this research.

Cultural events are co-opted into this process, becoming symbols of a mythologised city and its positioning as simultaneously drawing on older narratives of identity and casting away the shackles placed upon it by the decline of industry. Running in parallel with this, those on the 'culture' side of this 'culture/regeneration' partnership continue to view culture in a more pluralistic way than their 'regeneration' or policy-based counterparts, emphasising the way in which the patronage of civic bodies concerned with regeneration enables cultural bodies to pursue differing priorities. In the case of MIF this is an understanding of the financial benefits co-existing with a more widespread belief in the ability of such cultural events to showcase a city, showcase the arts and also enrich lives, along with an awareness of the tensions that occur when major funding is predicated upon the fulfilment of a narrower range of objectives than those that they

believe can be achieved through cultural events, such as the evidence that can be found through MIF Creative[37].

The processes of re-imaging the city, of which the production and consumption of cultural events is one, are highly networked, and whilst this can be seen as a case of the 'usual suspects' as discussed in Chapter 6, there are also alternative networks in evidence that present culture and the city in a different light, but these are overshadowed by the stories implemented by those with a greater level of power and authority within the city. It can be argued here that culture's co-option into urban regeneration would be more effective and have greater benefits if there were to be more of a balance here, between the hard-nosed regeneration focus, the more theoretical, conceptual understandings of imagined cities, and the more local focus afforded by community involvement in arts and culture, particularly as the research here has shown that an event such as MIF can play a role in all of these areas. In order for this to be achieved, it seems as though a wider shift in the understanding of cultural value needs to occur not just on the level of cultural production and consumption, but also at government level.

This thesis has used the example of one, recurring cultural event in order to consider the marketed or branded city, and its relation to what may be understood as its 'reality'. It has positioned Manchester in particular as a city of stories whereby an enduring city identity circulating amongst those with levels of power and authority serves to reproduce histories of self-assertion and success, showing the strength of belief in an imagined city. Culture here is seen as a city's tool as asserted within culture and urban regeneration rhetoric, but also as emblematic of symbolic capital within urban elites who use it to (re)position urban narratives.

Due to funding systems, the production and mobilisation of culture and cultural events are tied up in this wider landscape of branding and place-marketing, thus producing and reproducing images of the city that are attractive to an external audience, whilst potentially neglecting the impact of such events on local residents. This then serves to contribute to an imbalance in articulations of cultural value, where despite the beliefs of those within cultural organisations that art and culture should be able to enrich our lives in a way that complements such essential areas as the health and wellbeing afforded by healthcare or education, this narrative is subsumed by bold touristic outlooks which may

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[37] For example, an evaluation of the MIF Creative programme for MIF11 showed that it engaged with 4,000 people outside of the audiences for these shows (the target was 2,500), with each project meeting the majority of its objectives (predominantly related to engagement and outreach) (Devlin, 2011)

alienate sections of the community. In highlighting the complexity of arguments around cultural value, and the range of values attributed to cultural events by members of an urban (cultural) elite, the research presented here problematises culture-led urban regeneration, allowing for a deeper understanding of the motivations of those with a level of power over such processes. As a result of this, a number of suggestions can be made not only about potential avenues for further research, but also ways in which cultural policy can gain greater traction within a landscape of ongoing austerity – suggestions that are laid out below.

9.2 Addressing the aims

Through 15 months of embedded case study research, the evidence examined here suggests that events such as MIF do contribute to visions and understandings of the city, and feed into the way that Manchester is represented to a wider audience, in part through a connection with the 'Original Modern' ethos that was developed for the city at around the same time as the inception of MIF. The Festival's practices, both in terms of the events that take place and the more day-to-day activities observed in the MIF offices, serve to reinforce a number of defining elements of the way that Manchester can be viewed through MIF: particularly confidence, ambition, and a desire to be seen as the 'first' in line with a number of historical examples.

It has been found throughout the research, however, that whilst many of those with the power to dictate the kinds of understandings of the city that can be presented through cultural events do prioritise the economic project of culture-led regeneration and urban policy more widely, there are a number of varied goals and desires amongst the cultural and civic actors who were interviewed as a part of this study, with these goals and desires suggesting that it would be reductive to suggest that MIF were an elite project solely concerned with economics. Amongst MIF employees particularly, there was a belief in the ability of events such as those presented by the Festival to contribute to social as well as economic impacts, particularly through the outreach and opportunities offered through the MIF Creative programme and MIF Volunteers. What is evident, however, is that these elements of the Festival appear to be given less emphasis in the overall narrative of MIF, thus perpetuating a representation of the Festival as being a part of elite or high culture.

Through the support of MIF given by MCC – along with the honesty with which MCC ally themselves with the economic goals of culture-led regeneration – an image is

presented of Manchester as ambitious and outward-facing, inclined towards goals of inward-investment and the boosting of image that does not necessarily focus upon the city's own residents. MIF, therefore, can be seen as a key player in the development of Manchester's ongoing contemporary narrative, helping to position the city in a manner that values the boosting of tourism and the economy through a carefully constructed image, an effort that has seen ongoing investment in culture on a variety of scales. More generally, the arguments presented here feed into current conversations surrounding cultural value (such as those described at the beginning of this chapter), as well as illuminating the use of culture within regeneration as tied up in power relations closely linked to elite networks.

9.3 Research Contributions

Through combining the areas of cultural studies and urban regeneration, it has been possible to contribute to the field of urban regeneration studies by adding a level of enquiry that has been absent from much of the literature in this field. With a strong basis for understanding culture-led regeneration's scale and scope offered by Evans (2005, 2006, 2009) or Garcia (2004a, 2004b), this work helps to further the understanding of culture's role within regeneration – particularly its continuing role in a time where much regeneration policy has disappeared – and the ways in which both power and cultural and symbolic capital result in particular visions of the city being promoted and perpetuated, thus giving a deeper understanding of who is involved in, and who benefits from, culture-led regeneration in the UK and beyond. In relation to this, the research presented here shows the benefits of using ethnographic methods in exploring culture and regeneration, leading to a richness of data that can complement more widespread studies of the utilisation of culture within regeneration and urban policy. Whilst inevitable issues around closeness to the field throughout a prolonged period of research presented a number of ethical challenges (as referenced within Chapter 5 and commented upon through the empirical work), the access gained through this process has enabled a deeper understanding of the problem at hand.

Whilst neither the predominantly ethnographic methodology nor the cultural studies lens through which this research has been pursued are new approaches, it is rare for such sociological, cultural studies-based methods and theory to be used in the practical context of urban regeneration. This approach has allowed the problematic of the co-option of cultural events into urban regeneration and broader urban policy strategies to be viewed from a different angle than that which has previously been explored within

urban regeneration literature, thereby addressing a pre-existing neglect of consideration of the types of power and capital tied up in culture and urban regeneration and enabling us to see how this contributes to a city identity. In utilising literature that explores the imaginaries of cities (the likes of Van Ulzen (2007), Davis (1991), Hannigan (1998) and Zukin (1995)), there has been an opportunity here to incorporate such understandings of cities with the more policy-based nature of much urban regeneration literature. This approach has enabled the research presented here to highlight that culture's use should not always be defined in the restrictive economic terms that are often assumed within urban regeneration, and that by accepting this, we can better explore culture's multi-faceted role within place-making

9.4 Implications

The empirical findings afforded by the chosen methodology and the literature explored contribute to areas of policy and practice which have previously been lacking in in-depth evidence surrounding everyday workings of culture-led regeneration, with ethnographic methods providing a level of nuance which would not have been possible through interviews and document analysis alone. This has allowed the research to provide evidence of the ways in which some impacts of cultural events and articulations of cultural value, in particular those impacts that do not fit a model of economic or touristic benefit, are obscured through the (re)telling of a particular set of urban narratives, despite their continued existence within this field. As a result of an ethnographic methodology, it has been possible to go beyond a study of outcomes in which the economic is prioritised over less tangible outcomes, but also to commit to a study of process rather than simply one of evaluation. This therefore allows a greater understanding of some of the potential reasons behind the ongoing disparity between the weight given to different aspects of cultural events and culture-led regeneration, suggesting that rather than a case of social or cultural outcomes being harder to evaluate, there is a case here of the priorities of local authorities tending towards the external gaze of inward investment.

Considering policy, this work adds further weight to current arguments that centre around cultural value comprising more than economic value, as well as perhaps warning of some of the problems that have been highlighted in Department of Culture, Media and Sport figures on cultural participation (DCMS, 2015). For example, it has been highlighted here that free tickets do not equate to engagement, and even within organisations such as MIF that benefit from high levels of local authority support and

are displaying a shifting nature that is going further towards being more inclusive, it can still be argued that the 'high culture'/'popular culture' divide is clearer than many of those who are a part of the cultural elite would like to believe. Evidently, it can be questioned whether this is really a problem, but in times of ongoing austerity and likely further future cuts to arts and culture budgets, the fight for the arts must comprise more than economic value, but also more than the traditional 'art for art's sake' argument. Examples such as MIF show that value in cultural engagement and participation can be gained through outreach and volunteering, and yet the underplaying of these roles serves to reduce the message of MIF to arts and economy, enhancing Manchester's position as a 'cultural capital'[38], but contributing to ongoing tensions around culture in our cities.

Alongside these policy issues, there are also implications to be considered in terms of urban regeneration practice. It is clear from the work presented here that in some cities at least, culture is now an ingrained part of urban policy in a post-regeneration landscape. There is value in an embedded understanding of cultural events in this context, allowing a view of cultural events that does not take for granted the known benefits of tourism and economic impact, but further considers the kind of image that is presented through such events and the way in which this can be seen by various audiences. The findings outlined here could therefore be of interest to those in an academic field considering cultural studies or urban regeneration (or, indeed, both of these concurrently), as well as those decision-makers who interact with cultural policy and urban regeneration in their professional practice. Based on the findings of this research, a number of recommendations can be drawn for these groups. Within academia, it can be suggested that a greater focus on practice and the use of ethnographic techniques can strengthen research into culture and urban regeneration by examining themes such as cultural value from a wider range of perspectives than those gathered through evaluative techniques, allowing social considerations to come to the fore alongside more quantitative measures of impact. In terms of policy, the scope of academic inquiry here has allowed a more in-depth evaluation of an individual case than is often possible through policy research due to the extended time period afforded to PhD study. Whilst this methodology may not be appropriate outside of academia, the depth of the qualitative material presented here adds weight to the argument that policy and practice around culture's use within urban

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[38] Rough Guides have recently referred to Manchester as "Britain's new cultural capital", due, in part, to MIF (Atkinson, 2015)

regeneration should take care to consider qualitative as well as quantitative measures of success.

9.5 Reflection and Further Research

Overall, the research presented here serves to further corroborate the understanding of culture as incredibly complex, though rather than attempting to unpack this complexity in terms of the varied understandings of what the word 'culture' can mean, it has addressed the complexity inherent in one particular understanding: that of one cultural event in a contemporary urban context defined by post-industrialism and subsequent reinvention. Whilst this focus on one specific case study cannot be extrapolated to apply to any city with a similar background, this research can help to further understandings of the often unexplored structures of power and capital that underpin contemporary practices in culture-led urban regeneration, as well as lending weight to a variety of current discussions around cultural value. The findings suggest that power structures and levels of social, cultural and symbolic capital should be taken into account when considering the ongoing co-option of culture within urban regeneration. Given that the agenda around culture-led regeneration within cities is likely to be driven by those with high levels of power and capital, it should be considered that this may lead to the positioning of a city identity that reflects the interests of a small minority. Questions of cultural value can therefore be interrogated in part by displaying an awareness of these power issues.

One area in which this research could be furthered is in the consideration of the wider public and their engagement with the representations of Manchester as articulated through MIF. Access to elite interviewees has enabled a level of insight into Manchester's cultural and civic workings that uncovered an in-depth understanding of the ways in which these groups view, and utilise, culture, but the effect of this on the general population of the city cannot be inferred from such a research design. It is suggested, therefore, that an examination of the ways in which these representations created through MIF are received by Manchester's population more generally would provide another way of understanding contemporary uses of culture in the city, furthering the work that is presented here. There are also opportunities to conduct similar studies across different cities in order to explore comparative cases, or indeed to expand this study within Manchester to observe other cultural activity within the city. These areas of additional research would further expand the body of evidence around the nature of culture's role within urban regeneration.

From this study alone, however, the in-depth material that is offered here contributes to the growing field of culture and urban regeneration at a time when such explorations of cultural events and cultural value are of increasing importance given the ongoing threat of budget cuts within culture and the arts. Studies such as this one have the potential to play a role in furthering the understandings of the ways in which culture contributes to visions of the city through examining practices and micro-processes alongside the outcomes of such cultural events. Through the in-depth examination of one cultural event, we have learned here that culture's role within urban regeneration should not be considered simply as one of increasing tourist footfall, or improving economic circumstances. As well as this, an event such as MIF shows that culture has the potential to shape the way in which a city is viewed by those within the city and people further afield, and as such there is the opportunity to then examine and critique these visions of the city and those who propose or support them.

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11 Appendix 1: MIF Funders

Sponsor	2007	2009	2011	2013
ACE (Lottery Funded)	X	X	Additional Public Sector Funder	X
Addleshaw Goddard LLP	Corporate Member	Corporate Member	Corporate Member	Corporate Member
AGMA	X	Additional Public Sector Funder	Additional Public Sector Funder	Additional Public Sector Funder
Albany Crown Ltd	Corporate Partner	X	X	X
Allied London	Corporate Partner	Gold Corporate Partner	Silver Corporate Partner	X
American Airlines	X	X	Official Supplier	X
Argent	Corporate Partner	Gold Corporate Partner	Gold Corporate Partner	X
Arts Council England	Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder
ARUP	Corporate Member	X	Corporate Member	Corporate Member
ASK Property Developments	Corporate Partner	X	Corporate Member	X
Bam	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	Silver Supporter
BBC	Media Partner	Media Partner	Media Partner	Media Partner
BDP	X	X	Silver Corporate Partner	Silver Supporter
Bluemantle	X	X	Corporate Member	Corporate Member
Booths Food, Wine and Grocery	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
British Council	X	Additional Public Sector Funder	X	X
Brother UK Ltd	X	X	Corporate Member	X

Bruntwood	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Partner
Buro Happold	X	X	Corporate Member	X
Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams	Corporate Member	X	X	X
Calouste Gukbenkian Foundation	X	X	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations
Carillion	X	X	X	Gold Supporter
City Inn/Mint Hotel	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	X
Cobbetts	Official Supplier	Official Supporter	Official Supporter	X
Conlon Construction	Corporate Member	X	X	X
Crosby Lend Lease	Corporate Member	X	X	X
Cruden Group	X	X	Corporate Member	X
Culture Ireland	X	X	Additional Public Sector Funder	X
DCMS Jerwood Creative Bursaries Scheme	X	X	Trusts and Foundations	X
Deloitte	Official Supplier	X	X	X
Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	X	Additional Public Sector Funder	X	X
Development Securities Plc	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	X
DoubleTree by Hilton	X	X	X	Official Partner
Drivers Jonas LLP	X	Corporate Member	X	X
DWF	X	X	X	Gold Supporter

EDAW/AECOM	X	Corporate Member	X	X
Ener-G	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
Ernst & Young	Corporate Member	X	X	X
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	X	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations
Eversheds	X	X	Corporate Member	Corporate Member
Ferrious	X	X	X	Corporate Member
Foyle Foundation	X	X	Trusts and Foundations	X
Frogmore Northern	X	X	Corporate Member	X
GMPTE	X	Corporate Member	X	X
GVA Grimley	Corporate Member	X	X	X
IESA Limited	X	X	Corporate Member	X
Insider	Official Supplier	X	X	X
Kuits Solicitors	X	X	X	Corporate Member
Laing O'Rourke	X	Gold Corporate Partner	Gold Corporate Partner	Gold Supporter
Lloyds TSB Development Capital (LDC)	Corporate Member	X	X	X
Manchester Airport Group	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Partner
Manchester Central	X	X	X	Gold Supporter
Manchester City Council	Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder/MIF Creative Supporter	Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder
Manchester Enterprises	X	MIF Creative Supporter	X	X

Manchester: Knowledge Capital	Additional Funder	MIF Creative Supporter	X	X
Marcus Worthington Group	X	X	X	Corporate Member
Martin Stockley Associates	X	Corporate Member	X	X
Martin Stockley Associates	Corporate Member	X	X	X
MEN Media	Media Partner	Media Partner	Media Partner	Media Partner
MIF Pioneers (individual giving)	X	X	16	X
Muse Developments	X	X	Corporate Member	X
NCP Manchester	Official Supporter	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Partner
NESTA	X	MIF Creative Supporter	X	X
Nikal	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	X
NWDA	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	X	X
One St Peter's Square	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	X	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations
Peter Moores Foundation	X	Trusts and Foundations	X	X
People's Postcode Lottery	X	X	X	Trusts and Foundations
Playstation Season	Official Sponsor	X	X	X
Property Alliance Group Ltd	Corporate Partner	X	X	X
PRS for Music Foundation	X	X	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations

PZ Cussons	X	Official Sponsor	Official Sponsor	Official Partner
Regatta	X	Gold Corporate Partner	Corporate Member	Silver Supporter
Saab	Official Supporter	X	X	X
Salford City Council	Other Funder	Additional Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder	Public Sector Funder
Sandy Brown Associates LLP	X	Corporate Member	X	X
Selfridges & Co	X	X	Silver Corporate Partner	Official Provider
Shepherd Construction	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	Corporate Member
Siemens	X	X	Corporate Member	Gold Supporter
Soapworks	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	X
Speedy	X	Official Supporter	Official Supplier	Gold Supporter
SPX	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	X
Steinberg Family CT	X	X	Trusts and Foundations	X
Stephenson Bell architects & planners	Official Supplier	Official Supplier	Official Supplier	X
Stephenson: ISA	X	X	X	Official Provider
Taylor Lynn Corporation Ltd	X	Silver Corporate Partner	X	X
The Bloxham Charitable Trust	X	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations
The Co-operative	X	X	Official Sponsor	Official Partner
The Eric Wright Group	X	X	Corporate Member	X

The Granada Foundation	Additional Funder	X	X	X
The Guardian	Media Partner	Media Partner	Media Partner	Media Partner
The Henry Moore Foundation	Additional Funder	X	X	X
The John Ellerman Foundation	X	X	X	Trusts and Foundations
The Marcus Worthington Group	X	X	Corporate Member	X
The Metabolic Studio	X	X	Trusts and Foundations	X
The North West Business Leadership Trust	Additional Funder	X	X	X
The Peel Group	X	X	Gold Corporate Partner	X
The Printworks	X	Corporate Member	X	X
The Professional Footballers' Association	X	Corporate Member	X	X
The Royal Bank of Scotland	Corporate Member	X	X	X
The Zochonis Charitable Trust	X	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations	Trusts and Foundations
Thwaites	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
UK Film Council (Lottery Funded)	X	X	Additional Public Sector Funder	X
United Utilities	Official Sponsor	X	X	X
Urban Splash Ltd	Corporate Partner	X	X	X
Virgin Trains	Official Sponsor	X	Silver Corporate Partner	Official Provider
Vision Media	X	X	Additional Public Sector	X

			Funder	
Wates Construction	X	X	Bronze Corporate Partner	X
West Properties (UK) Ltd	Corporate Partner	X	X	X
William Hare Ltd	Corporate Member	X	X	X
Work|Shop Properties Ltd	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
Wrengate	Corporate Member	Corporate Member	X	X
Your Housing Group	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
1st1st	X	X	X	Silver Supporter
5Plus Architects	X	X	X	Corporate Member
TOTALS:	**42**	**40**	**61**	**50**

12 Appendix 2: Interview Schedules

Interview Schedules were amended for each interviewee, using the following themes and questions as a starting point:

Introductory Section

- Thanks for time, can I record, signing of consent form
- PhD is about exploring how cultural events represent cities
- Links to regeneration, also city marketing and branding
- MIF is the case study (attending since '07, focus of MA dissertation '10, volunteered '11, employed since '12), intended to illuminate Manchester more generally and link to scholarship/policy around culture and regeneration
- Qualitative study, interested in social and environmental aspects not just economic. Focus on representation and identity
- You don't have to answer questions, and can stop at any time
- Focus is on personal views/opinions, there is no right/wrong
- Questions based around representing brand, links to regeneration, importance of networks

MIF and Brand
- Do cultural events alter perceptions of cities? How?
- What perception of Manchester does MIF evoke (to you, or to others)?
- What makes MIF of Manchester, why is it here and not elsewhere?
- Original Modern, city identity, civic pride
- Is it important for e.g. MIF to be rooted in place?
- How does MIF fit into Manchester's brand?
- Do you think this brand travels?

MIF and Regeneration

- Do you see culture and regeneration as fundamentally linked?

- Does MIF impact on Manchester's regeneration? How?

- Are there potential conflicts between economic/social/environmental goals? – from perspective of working most with social

- Why is a commitment to culture like that of MIF (and support given by MCC) important? Is it even more important in difficult times?

- Is it important for MIF to be seen as contributing to regeneration? Or if it's about wider partnerships can this be fulfilled by other partners?

MIF and Networks

- Do you see yourself as part of a network of individuals?

- Social networks: can these contribute positively to MIF and its contribution to Manchester more generally?

- Is it important to broaden audiences through developments like social media?

- Are there any pitfalls of orgs like MIF embracing social networks?

Final Points

- It's about connecting ideas of regeneration, governance, marketing, branding with the less tangible ideas of e.g. identity, community

- Can I follow up post-festival?

- I'll be full time at MIF through June and July, look forward to meeting again

- Any questions?

NB: Due to the anonymisation of interviewees, full lists of sample questions cannot be given here in case of the identity of interviewees becoming known. However, the questions listed above were put to all interviewees.

13 Appendix 3: MIF Events

Further information on the events listed here can be found at www.mif.co.uk

MIF07

Monkey: Journey to the West *(Circus opera based on Chinese legend with composition from Damon Albarn (Blur, Gorillaz) and visuals from Jamie Hewlett (Gorillaz))*

The Ground Beneath Her Feet *(Concert piece based on Salman Rushdie's novel of the same name)*

Interiors *(Performance piece featuring Johnny Vegas)*

Heston Blumenthal – Chilled Summer Treats *(Food tasting at the Festival Pavilion)*

Manchester Dines *(Free food showcase in collaboration with Manchester Food and Drink Festival)*

For All the Wrong Reasons *(Theatre/dance performance directed by Lies Pauwels)*

Perverted by Language *(Launch of an anthology of stories inspired by The Fall)*

The Pianist *(The memoirs of Wladyslaw Szpilman, directed by Neil Bartlett and performed in English for the first time)*

Kapital *(Screening of a film connecting folklore and Manchester music)*

Dead Wedding *(Opera conceived and directed by Faulty Optic)*

Industrial Resolution *(Visual arts installation set to a variety of DJ sets across one weekend)*

The Great Indoors *(A series of free events and activities for children and families)*

Il Tempo del Postino – A Group Show *(Group art show co-curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Philippe Parreno)*

Carlos Acosta *(Ballet performance including premiere of 'the Tocororo Suite')*

Queen and Country *(Art project by Steve McQueen commemorating British soldiers killed in Iraq)*

Lou Reed: Berlin *(Reed performing the record Berlin in full for the first time)*

The Fall *(Live gig to support the launch of Perverted By Language)*

Kanye West *(One-off Manchester show from the hip hop artist)*

PJ Harvey *(Solo show as Harvey's first UK performance of 2007)*

Orchestral Suite by William Orbit *(World premiere, composed by Orbit and performed by the BBC Philharmonic)*

Happy Mondays & special guests *(The first performance of the Manchester band's new album post-reunion)*

The Cunning Little Vixen & Alphabicycle *(Family concert setting the film The Cunning Little Vixen to live accompaniment by the Halle orchestra, and premiering Alphabicycle, composed by Colin Matthews)*

Ojos de Brujo *(First Manchester show from Spanish world musicians)*

Bert Jansch with Beth Orton & Bernard Butler *(Guitarist and songwriter Jansch performing new and old music with Orton and Butler)*

The Blue Nile *(The band's first show in over seven years)*

Unknown Pleasures – New Bands series *(Shows from emerging artists such as The Noisettes, Wild Beasts and Final Fantasy)*

Unknown Pleasures at The Quays *(All-day free music event)*

The Assembly – Rachel Davies *(Film installation based on teenage memories of the Manchester Girls Choir)*

Manchester:Peripheral – Futuresonic *(Audio-visual installations in the city centre's Piccadilly Gardens)*

PANDA-monium – PANDA *(Showcase of art, theatre and dance from the Performing Arts Network and Development Agency)*

The Rusholme Project – Shisha *(Public artwork from South Asian artists)*

To the Left of the Rising Sun – Castlefield Gallery *(Art exhibition exploring post-colonialism)*

The Bruntwood Playwriting Competition for the Royal Exchange *(Performances of Pretend You Have Big Buidlings and Monster – the two winning entries from a playwriting competition launched in 2005)*

Slavery in Our Time *(Symposium and writing day based on contemporary slavery as an 'urgent issue of our time')*

Exodus Live Special with Reem Kelani & the Beating Wing Orchestra *(Premiere of a composition by Palestinian singer and musician Reem Kelani)*

The Guardian Debates *(Debates on a number of topics including 'Do art and politics mix?' and 'Is London bad for Britain?')*

Artists in Conversation *(Conversations throughout the festival with artists featured in the programme)*

Festival Futures *(Debates and discussions on the future of the body, journalism and the planet)*

The Manchester Debate *(Debate on whether TV is good for society)*

MIF09

It Felt Like A Kiss *(Immersive theatre production created by Adam Curtis and Punchdrunk, looking at America's rise to power in the 20th Century)*

Kraftwerk / Steve Reich *(World premiere of Steve Reich's 2x5, plus performance from Kraftwerk, in Manchester's Velodrome)*

Marina Abramovic Presents… *(Group art show with a concept by Marina Abramovic, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Maria Balshaw)*

JS Bach / Zaha Hadid Architects *(Performances of Bach's solo instrumental works in a temporary concert hall designed by Zaha Hadid)*

Everybody Loves A Winner *(Theatre production in which the Royal Exchange theatre was transformed into a bingo hall)*

Antony and the Johnsons *(Two concerts from the Mercury Music Prize winning artist and the Manchester Camerata)*

Flailing Trees *(Public art installation examining the state of the environment)*

The Manchester Report *(Debate and discussion on climate change and carbon reduction)*

Procession by Jeremy Deller *(A Mancunian procession and associated exhibition created by Turner Prize-winning Jeremy Deller)*

Elbow and the Halle *(Two concerts from Mercury Music Prize winners Elbow, in collaboration with composer Joe Duddell and the Halle orchestra)*

Carlos Acosta *(Programme of classical ballet accompanied by the BBC Philharmonic)*

Prima Donna *(Opera composed by singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright)*

End of the Road *(Performance by the Young@Heart choir, made up of amateur singers aged 73 to 90)*

The Great Indoors *(A series of free events and activities for children and families)*

De La Soul *(Concert celebrating the 20ᵗʰ anniversary of the band's album 3 Feet High and Rising)*

Laurie Anderson and Lou Reed *(Music and spoken word from Anderson and Reed)*

Same Teens *(Local promoters present gigs including Mystery Jets solely for 15-19 year olds)*

Amadou & Mariam and the Beating Wing Orchestra *(Manchester orchestra of musicians from refugee and migrant backgrounds performing with Malian duo Amadou & Mariam)*

The Durutti Column: A Paean to Wilson *(Concerts from the first band to sign to Factory Records to pay tribute to the late label-manager)*

True Faith: A Celebration of Manchester-Made Talent *(Discussions with Manchester musicians, and performances by up-and-coming local acts)*

Festival Feast *(Free dining sampling dishes from Manchester chefs)*

The Real Book North West Band *(Concert to mark the end of MIF and the beginning of the Manchester Jazz Festival)*

MIF11

Bjork – Biophilia *(World premiere of new Bjork live show)*

Alina Ibragimova, The Quay Brothers *(Chamber music performances accompanied by stop-motion animation)*

Doctor Dee – Damon Albarn, Rufus Norris *(Opera/theatre piece based on the life of Elizabethan astrologer John Dee, co-created by Albarn and Norris)*

The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic *(Theatre piece based on, and starring, Abramovic, directed by Robert Wilson and featuring music from Antony Hegarty of Antony and the Johnsons)*

The Crash of the Elysium / Punchdrunk *(Immersive theatre for children designed by Punchdrunk and based on a Doctor Who idea from Steven Moffatt and Tom MacRae)*

Victoria Wood – That Day We Sang *(Musical written and directed by Wood, based on the Manchester School Children's Choir of the 1960s)*

11 Rooms – Group Show *(Group art show curated by Klaus Biesenbach and Hans Ulrich Obrist)*

Snoop Dogg – Doggystyle *(Performance of Snoop Dogg's debut album featuring the original featured guest artists)*

1395 Days Without Red & Projections *(Film and video installations at the Whitworth Art Gallery)*

Amadou & Maryam – Eclipse *(Performance from the Malian duo in an entirely blacked out concert hall)*

Sacred Sites *(Performances by five artists of different faiths, in sites of worship across the city)*

Music Boxes *(Free activities and artworks for children)*

Sinead O'Connor *(Featuring the world premiere performance of O'Connor's 2011 album, Home)*

John Gerrard – Infinite Freedom Exercise *(Film/Virtual Reality installation in the city centre)*

WU LYF *(Local band performing in a railway arch in the city centre)*

Lavinia Greenlaw – Audio Obscura *(Audio installation in Manchester Piccadilly station)*

Rickie Lee Jones *(Jones performing her 1981 album Pirates in full)*

Johnny Vegas *(Theatre show from the comedian/performer)*

Wagner's Die Walkure *(Performances of Wagner's Ring Cycle with a newly commissioned dramatic prologue to the opera)*

Mark Andre *(First UK performances of Andre's music, some accompanied by film screenings)*

True Faith *(Discussions with Manchester musicians, and performances by up-and-coming local acts)*

Paul Heaton – The 8th *(Performance of a song in eight chapters, written by Beautiful South and Housemartins artist Paul Heaton)*

Vertical Farm *(Launch of a three-year project focusing on vertical urban farms to find new ways to feed a growing population)*

MIF13

Massive Attack v Adam Curtis *(Screening of an Adam Curtis documentary accompanied by a live performance of a score by Massive Attack, with set design from Felix Barrett of Punchdrunk amongst others)*

The Machine *(New play based around the chess match between Garry Kasparov and IBM super-computer Deep Blue in 1997)*

Abida Parveen *(Rare UK performance from Pakistani Sufi singer)*

The Old Woman *(Theatre piece/performance art directed by Robert Wilson and starring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Willem Dafoe)*

do it 20 13 *(Group art show curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist; a 20th anniversary show of the original do it shows featuring new commissions)*

Macbeth *(Featuring Kenneth Branagh's first Shakespeare performance in over a decade, and directed by Branagh and Rob Ashford, performed in a deconsecrated church)*

The xx *(Mercury Music Prize winners take over a secret city-centre location – accessed via tunnels – and perform for 60 people every night of the festival)*

Manchester Camerata, Martha Argerich *(Argentinian pianist Argerich performing with the Manchester Camerata)*

Michelangelo Sonnets *(Director Peter Sellers staging Shostakovich's Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Bach's Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen, performed by bass-baritone Eric Owens and organist Cameron Carpenter)*

The Masque of Anarchy *(Percy Bysshe Shelley's 1819 91-verse poem based on the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, performed by Maxine Peake)*

Are We Powerless? *(Debate hosted by Evan Davis based around contemporary protest and the relevance of The Masque of Anarchy to post-recession Britain)*

The Rite of Spring (CANCELLED) *(Performance of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring staged by theatre director Romeo Castellucci and featuring choreographed dust for the centenary of the first performance of the piece)*

Dan Graham *(Live art installation)*

Tino Sehgal *(Immersive live art in a blacked-out space)*

Mette Ingvartsen *(Live art and choreography)*

Marten Spangberg *(Live art and choreography)*

Eszter Salamon *(Live art and choreography)*

Neneh Cherry and RocketNumberNine *(First performance of Cherry's new album in its entirety)*

John Tavener *(Three world premieres of Tavener's music, including a performance by the MIF Sacred Sounds Women's Choir)*

Goldfrapp *(Performing their sixth album live for the first time, accompanied by a string orchestra from the Royal Northern College of Music)*

Mogwai: Zidane *(The post-rock band perform their soundtrack to the Zidane, A 21st Century Portrat, live for the first time, accompanied by a screening of the film)*

River of Fundament *(Preview of new film project from artist Matthew Barney and composer Jonathan Belper)*

The Biospheric Project *(Continuation of 2011's Vertical Farm, creating an urban farm in a derelict Salford mill)*

Once Upon A Story *(Theatre and performance events for children)*

Jamal Edwards and SB.TV presents *(Theatre, discussion and comedy from multimedia company SB.TV)*

Coal on Cotton *(65 hour continuous art piece from Indian artist Nikhil Chopra, exploring connections between colonial India and Britain)*

Delphic *(Manchester band performing their album Collections with musicians from around the globe)*

Despacio *(Performances on a custom sound system developed by James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem and David and Stephen Dewaele of 2Many DJs)*

MONEY *(Local band playing ahead of the release of their debut album)*

Rob da Bank *(Radio 1 DJ presents an 'A-Z of Manchester' with different shows for different decades)*