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# Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990

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ABSTRACT This paper revisits Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990, and considers the main criticisms made of Glasgow's cultural policy as urban renewal strategy. It argues that while many of the criticisms made by opposition groups such as *Workers' City* were valid, and largely supported by the economic and social problems that have faced the City since 1990, nonetheless it also suggests that this critical response itself needs to be subjected to more thorough scrutiny. The paper claims that flagship cultural events can do little but gloss over and divert attention away from the major structural problems which characterise many ex-industrial cities and concludes by arguing that the lessons of Glasgow's experience are also very relevant for other cities such as Liverpool that are also increasingly embracing cultural policy as a route to urban transformation.

KEY WORDS: Glasgow, cultural policy, urban renewal, urban polarisation

## Introduction

In the preceding paper in this collection Beatriz García notes that 'culture' has become central to urban regeneration programmes throughout Europe. Over the past decade the development of a city-based cultural policy has become an indispensable tool in re-imagining and regenerating cities. Much has been written about Glasgow's year as European City of Culture (ECOC) in 1990. As a past – and for many a high successful –

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City of Culture, Glasgow continues to be mobilised as both a model and a reference point for other disadvantaged cities, now including Liverpool, ECOC 2008 (Bianchini, 1990; Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993; Gomez, 1998; Holcomb, 1993; Khan, 2003b). Above all, Glasgow is widely acclaimed as the benchmark for other de-industrialised and/or 'second cities' to follow. It was the first ex-industrial city to develop a cultural-led regeneration programme and to be designated as ECOC. 'Doing a Glasgow' has now become a recurring theme in discussions of urban cultural policy and place marketing in many of Europe's older industrial cities.

The main aim of this paper is to critically explore some of the legacies of Glasgow ECOC 1990. The paper is not concerned with post-1990 policy developments as such but with offering 'critical reflections' on Glasgow's reign as ECOC 1990. In doing so it returns to the attacks made on the '1990' event itself and subjects these in turn to critique. In arguing that the so-called 'Glasgow Model' for urban regeneration is essentially sustaining a myth, as opposed to celebrating a reality, the paper raises important questions for those who are now debating what ECOC status will mean for Liverpool in 2008 as well as for other ex-industrial cities across Europe that are seeking to use culture as a key element in their regeneration programmes.

## Glasgow as ECOC 1990

> Mysteriously but dramatically, Glasgow has become the kind of place that people now want to visit, to see and be seen in. (Urry, 2002, p. 108)

There is nothing mysterious in Glasgow's rise to prominence as a tourist destination (see García, 2004, p. 107 for figures). Attracting tourists was a key component in the strategy of revisioning Glasgow, beginning with the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign in 1983, followed by the National Garden Festival in 1988 and ECOC 1990. The latest episode in the series is Glasgow's 2004 'rebranding' (at a cost of £1.5 million) as 'Glasgow: Scotland With Style' (*Sunday Herald*; *Scotland on Sunday*, 7 March 2004). This is the first significant image 'makeover' since the Miles Better campaign, and plays to Glasgow's strengths as a cultural locale and as the largest retail centre outside London. However, launched at a time when there has been a refocus on the City as a centre of poverty and deprivation, it has already been criticised as little more than cosmetic gloss (Scott, 2004).

The background to Glasgow's reign as European City of Culture and the '1990' cultural festival itself has been widely documented (see Boyle & Hughes, 1991; García, 2004; Gomez, 1998; Kantor, 2000; MacLeod, 2002; Pacione, 2001). With a history of long-term economic and industrial decline, together with massive problems of unemployment, poverty, deprivation and slum housing, organisations such as the then Scottish Development

Agency and Glasgow District Council embarked on a programme to 'transform' the City, remaking it as a post-industrial centre using place-marketing and cultural projects as the means through which external service sector investment could be lured:

> You can't stand still; you can't rely on the achievements of the past, no matter how impressive these may have been . . . Glasgow's days as a great industrial city are over. Sad as this may seem, its consequences are clear: set out to become a great post-industrial city . . . Glasgow's post-industrial future will stem in large part from its civic heritage and cultural wealth . . . with Glasgow perceived as a great city of culture, we can expect arts related tourism to grow – and with that comes the jobs. (Glasgow 1990 Festivals Office, 1990, p. 20)

Throughout the 1980s image, art and culture were used to refashion the city centre, along with new shopping centres, new 'warehouse' type housing in parts of the central city, including the newly remodelled 'Merchant City' area, lying to the immediate east of the City Centre (see MacLeod, 2002, pp. 611–613). Glasgow ECOC 1990 was a highpoint in this longer-term re-imaging strategy.

As has been implied above, there was a strong economic rationale to Glasgow 1990. In part this was about attracting tourists but it was also about making Glasgow a more attractive place in which to live and work. 'Culture' was a key component in this strategy and to this end the provision of 'flagship' arts and cultural venues, including a new concert hall costing almost £30 million and other new arts spaces were important developments (Myerscough, 1991). During the 1990 event, 700 cultural organisations and 22,000 people were involved in presenting and running nearly 3,500 events (Myerscough, 1991). In his evaluation report for the leading partners in Glasgow 1990 – Glasgow City Council, Strathclyde Regional Council and Scottish Enterprise – John Myerscough calculated that for a public sector investment of £33 million, Glasgow 1990 saw a net economic return to the Glasgow regional economy of between £10.3 and £14.1 million (Myerscough, 1991). In addition, the City now had a much-enhanced external reputation while a majority of Glaswegians also thought that 1990 had improved the City's image while making it a more pleasant place to live.

Overwhelmingly, the dominant narrative that emerges from accounts of Glasgow's period as ECOC, and of cultural led regeneration in the city per se, is that it was 'good for Glasgow' and that '1990' helped to 'transform' it. While there are a number of different dimensions to such claims, among the key elements are that Glasgow's national and international reputation was considerably enhanced and that the City's image and representation were overhauled. Throwing off its long-term image as a place of grim urban decay, poverty, violence and industrial unrest, Glasgow was re-imagined as a 'vibrant', 'post-industrial', 'fashionable' city. In the various celebratory discourses that emerged, the 'new' Glasgow was constructed and sharply contrasted with the 'old Glasgow', increasingly symbolised

by the large council estates that are such a notable, if marginalised, feature of the City's urban landscape.

**Whose Culture? Whose Glasgow? Revisiting the Critique of 1990**

> The 1990 agenda, set by the municipal authorities, was fixed on a straightforward premise, that the European City of Culture was both an affirmation of Art and an affirmation of Glasgow: thus if you were opposed to the first you were opposed to the other two. So the Workers' City Group was presented as an unpatriotic bunch of philistines, the ghost of Stalinist past and workerist future. By drawing attention to certain awkward realities we encountered a quite remarkable venom. (Kelman, 1992, p. 1)

This comment from James Kelman is as relevant now as it was for the period around 1990 (and it will also surely be of some relevance for those who seek to question some of the claims that are already being made about what ECOC will do for Liverpool in 2008). A notable Scottish writer, Kelman was a leading member of the '*Workers' City*' group, among the most vociferous opponents of all that Glasgow ECOC 1990 represented. And the venom that Kelman refers to has hardly dissipated. At a seminar on Glasgow's '*Changing International Appeal*' at the end of January 2004, it was not surprising to hear one of the keynote speakers referring to Workers' City as 'self-appointed representatives of Glasgow people, Stalinists who argued that ordinary Glasgow folk were not for 1990. But they were wrong'. Those who have dared to question or attack the urban 'renewal' strategies that have been adopted in Glasgow since the mid-1980s often find themselves on the defensive, perceived as heretics questioning some universal truth. There are some positive changes that critics would acknowledge: arguably Glasgow has a better reputation today than it did in the period prior to the late 1980s; many 'ordinary' Glaswegians attended 1990 events and festivals; having exhibitions, conferences, large cultural events, new museums, new art centres etc created opportunities of varied and multiple kinds for some Glaswegians; jobs have been created in the arts and cultural sectors and tourists see Glasgow as an attractive destination for a short-break. But, opponents argue, these benefits are outweighed by the inequities and limitations of 1990 and cultural-led regeneration.

The critique of Glasgow as ECOC in 1990 by Workers' City and others has been fully explored by Boyle & Hughes (1991) and what follows draws on their account, on the work of Damer (1989), Kemp (1990) and on two pamphlets produced by the Workers' City group (McLay, 1988; 1990) and on Ian Spring's exploration of the 'myths' of the 'new' Glasgow (Spring, 1990). Critics of Glasgow as the ECOC attacked not only the cultural substance of '1990' but also, more importantly, the economic and political narrative associated with it – and it is these that are the focus of the discussion here. In a nutshell, the main element in the attack from Workers'

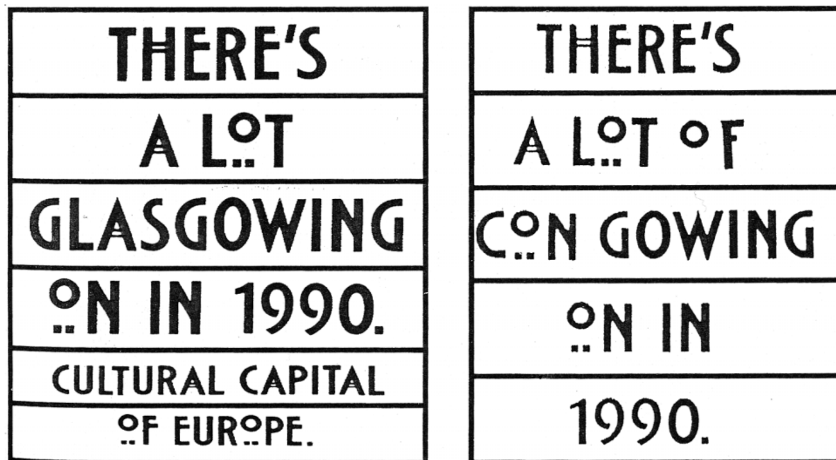


**Figure 1.** Contrasting images of Glasgow 1990.

City and other critics was that Glasgow ECOC had more to do with selling Glasgow as a place for inward investment than as a celebration of Glasgow culture and Glaswegian life – at least the culture of working-class Glasgow. Critics saw these as mutually exclusive:

> . . . the Year of Culture has more to do with power politics than culture. It has more to do with millionaire developers than art . . . In 1990, willy-nilly, everything is surrendered, once you join in the enterprise, for above all 1990 makes an unequivocal statement on behalf of corporate wealth. So that in 1990 it is more a question of art sponsoring big business, promoting the new tourist drive and giving aid and comfort to a shallow ethos of yuppie greed. And for all this of course the people of Glasgow will be made to foot the bill. (McLay, 1990, p. 87)

Saatchi and Saatchi's key slogan for 1990 – 'There's a lot of Glasgowing on' – was re-interpreted by critics as 'There's a lot of con gowing on' (see Figure 1).

The central issues for the critics associated with Workers' City revolved around what/whose Glasgow was being represented in 1990 – and who 'owned' 1990. The idea that the ECOC was an exercise in 'yuppifying' Glasgow, marginalising the City's past as a place of socialist agitation and working class struggle, was a recurring theme of the Workers' City critique. The image of the 'new' sanitised Glasgow was sharply at odds with the 'reality' of life in many of Glasgow's large council estates:

> With Saatchi and Saatchi's expert help they revamp the image and leave reality behind. They propagate an image which is false. There is privation and dereliction of the housing schemes . . . there is chronic unemployment and widespread DSS poverty with the usual concomitants – drug abuse and the manifold forms of community violence. This is not the Merchant City, but this is the real Glasgow. (McLay, 1990, p. 87)

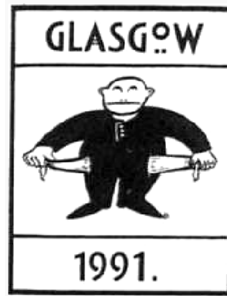


**Figure 2.** City poverty.

The economic and political aspects of the critiques offered here go to the heart of the whole place-marketing debate. Rightly, opponents of Glasgow 1990 sought to locate the entire event and the strategy that underpinned it within the context of Glasgow's longer-term economic decline. The ECOC mantle was embraced by City leaders as a way of promoting economic 'regeneration' in Glasgow. There is little disagreement between advocates of the ECOC strategy and its critics over this. However, Workers' City argued that the kind of regeneration being advanced through large-scale 'flagship' cultural events would bring massive benefits and profits for some and an economy ever more dependent, at best, on insecure, lowly paid service sector jobs for the majority. ECOC diverts attention and resources away from dealing with the massive problems of poverty and disadvantage. Thus, the alleged economic benefits that the ECOC would bring are attacked as little more than hollow promises. Instead, opponents argued that Glasgow would become a service sector sweatshop, its workers milked by inward investors who would move on at the first sign of greater profits to be made elsewhere. The result would be more poverty, greater economic hardship and an increasing divide between 'haves' and 'have nots'. This growing divide is also fuelled by a strategy that diverts badly needed resources into cultural events and away from addressing material hardship in the City (Figure 2).

The attacks of Workers' City were very much aimed at Glasgow's Labour administration. While often depicted as a bastion of 'Old Labour', in many ways Glasgow's ruling Labour Party were 'New Labour' well before Blair and Brown arrived on the scene. In Glasgow, Labour embraced the private sector, celebrated the role that the market had to play in economic and urban 'transformation', sought 'partnerships' with other agencies and the representatives of business before this had become fashionable and, essentially, embraced the 'trickle down' economics advocated then by the Conservatives under Thatcher. In providing incentives and opportunities for entrepreneurs to invest in the City (a policy which in any case pre-dated 1990), in part enticed by 'flagship' cultural events, the wealth that would be generated would eventually trickle down to the most disadvantaged

sections of Glasgow's population. Wealth creation, economic growth and competitiveness were the solution, the *only* solution, for Glasgow's social and economic problems.

While generally sympathetic to the criticisms of Glasgow 1990 advanced by Workers' City, their arguments do have their limitations. In drawing a distinction between a 'real' and a 're-imagined' 'new' Glasgow, they neglect the extent to which Glasgow was always a place being imagined and re-imagined, a place of often-conflicting stories and diverse histories. The claim that Glasgow's economic strategy was based almost entirely upon the attraction of (what would be mainly low paid) service sector jobs is well made. However, implicitly there is almost a celebration of, and yearning for, what are regarded as *real* working class jobs, the jobs of the shipyards, of the large engineering factories – the jobs that characterised much – *but not all* – of Glasgow's labour market in the first five to six decades of the twentieth century. Not only is this a rather masculine understanding of work, but it is also rather workerist and neglects the extent to which lower quality service jobs (as well as many 'industrial' jobs) were long part and parcel of working life in the City. It also ignores the extent to which restructuring has always been a feature of capitalist labour markets. Celebrating working class history and working class struggle is one thing, but romanticising about the horrors of factory life is something else altogether. There is another – and related – problem here with the Workers' City analysis. While the supposed benefits to be brought to the City by inward investment were rightly questioned, in criticising multinational and external capital a case was made to protect 'indigenous' firms, especially small local companies, as if they promised more for 'ordinary' Glaswegians.

While hindsight is a wonderful thing, critics of Glasgow 1990 underestimated the extent to which the private sector and the market would come to play such a strategic role in the shaping of urban policies for Glasgow in the years to follow. But the questions that they raised about '1990', and the arguments that cultural regeneration would do little if anything for the vast majority of Glaswegians is surely borne out even by a brief discussion of the social and economic problems that have faced the City in the period since 1990.

## 'Certain Awkward Realities'

> I am delighted to be back here in Glasgow. John Reid reminded us all . . . how surprised he was in 1992 when Glasgow was made the European City of Culture. 'Glasgow smiles' was the slogan. Well take a look around the City. As Jack McConnell said yesterday, there's a lot more to smile about these days. (Prescott, 2003)

Confusion over dates and slogans aside, the comments by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott (and Scottish First Minister McConnell) at a

Conference in Glasgow in February 2003, show a remarkable ignorance of the realities of life for many in Glasgow today.

In the late 1990s, Danson and Mooney explored the idea that Glasgow had become a 'dual city', characterised by cultural-led regeneration, physical renewal in the city centre alongside the City's large peripheral housing estates, all too frequently depicted as residual backwaters of dependency, poverty and crime (Mooney & Danson, 1997; Danson & Mooney, 1998). In rejecting the dual city notion as inadequate they argued that it failed to capture the complex relationships between growth and decline in the city, that there is a relationship between market-led regeneration and the growing social polarisation of the Glasgow population throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Although the dual city narrative has been largely shelved in recent years, there is still talk of Glasgow as a 'twin track' or 'two-tier' city: a place of entrepreneurial vitality, tourism, retail activity and cultural festivals amidst the large-scale poverty and decay that characterises large parts of the City today. 'Spatial dilemmas' between the city centre and peripheral estates, to borrow the terminology of García, continue to be a feature of the Glasgow landscape (García, 2004, p.104). Kantor offers another perceptive slant on this, arguing that a 'dual urban strategy' has been adopted with the City's economic development agencies competing for private investment 'while casting about for programmes that deal with the social fallout of this strategy . . . boosting the downtown as a cultural capital while attending to the social miseries of decline through neighbourhood social programmes' (Kantor, 2000, pp. 807–808).

There is considerable evidence today in Glasgow, to borrow the phraseology of Kelman above, of 'certain awkward realities'. As Mooney & Johnstone note during the 1990s Glasgow's position as one of the most poverty-stricken cities in the UK was confirmed time and time again by successive reports, investigations and academic studies. Glasgow was frequently depicted as a 'city in crisis' (Mooney & Johnstone, 2000, pp. 173–175). The 'problem of' Glasgow has not abated as a result of Scottish Devolution in 1999. Hit hard by local government reorganisation in 1996, which removed both financial resources and population, there is a growing controversy that Devolution has brought major benefits for 'Edinburgh' at the expense of 'Glasgow'. Such claims have been widely aired in both the press and in academic studies (see for example Fraser, 2003; Khan, 2003a; *Sunday Herald*, 2002; Turok *et al*., 2003).

Glasgow's labour market has undergone major changes in recent times. From being the archetypal industrial city, and arguably most proletarianised of all UK cities, in 2003, 82.5% of its workforce were engaged in services (Slims, 2003). Between 1991 and 2001 service employment rose by 33% (OECD, 2002, p. 45) with a 46% increase in financial services employment between 1991/3 and 1999/2001 (Turok *et al*., 2003, pp. 21–22). In addition there was also a significant growth in employment in the 'hospitality', tourism, retail and leisure sectors, notable as sources of more poorly paid, casualised and 'irregular' forms of work. The City saw some success in attracting major call centre operations during the mid-1990s (see OECD,

2002, pp. 37–38; Turok *et al*., 2003, 2004) but in 2002–2004 as elsewhere in the UK, it has been hit by the closure of a number of these as jobs are transferred abroad.

Much has been made that, in recent years, Glasgow has enjoyed some economic growth and managed to avoid some of the worst effects of downturns affecting other parts of the UK. In their study of 'urban renaissance' in Glasgow, the OECD claimed that the economy of the city was at its most 'buoyant' for over 3 decades (OECD, 2002, p. 27). The message that is promoted by the City Council and other agencies is that Glasgow is on the 'up'. In reports such as '*Upbeat Glasgow*' (GCC/ Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, 2001) and '*Glasgow's Continuing Prosperity*' (Glasgow Economic Forum, 2003) the picture portrayed is that Glasgow has enjoyed an 'economic renaissance' but that competitiveness must be increased if this is to continue. However, while there has since the mid 1990s been something of a 'turnaround' in the economic fortunes of the City as a whole, in terms of employment generated, concerns have been voiced that the basis of this has been 'narrow' (and possibly also short-term and/or cyclical) with many of the benefits bypassing those Glaswegians who lack the skills necessary for the new services locating in the City (see Turok *et al*., 2003, 2004). The OECD noted that 50% of jobs are taken by non-Glasgow residents (OECD, 2002, p. 41).

The prosperity created through this 'renaissance' is something that has surely bypassed a substantial proportion of Glasgow's population. Amidst the clamour to announce that the City has enjoyed a 'jobs boom' in recent times, there is mounting evidence of deep-seated unemployment. In 2001, the City had an economic inactivity rate of 32% (123,000 people), well above that for Scotland (25%) and the UK (22%) (Source: Slims, 2003), and an employment rate of 61%, which is one of the lowest in the UK. Beatty and colleagues estimate that the real level of unemployment in Glasgow in 2002 was 26.6%, compared with 10.6% in Edinburgh and a national average of 9.5% (Beatty *et al*., 2002). This is accounted for by a significant increase in sickness-related benefits, with 72,000 on sickness and disability benefit alone (source: Turok *et al*. 2003, p. 37). In total, 34% of Glasgow's population were claiming a key benefit in 2001/02 (Source: Kenway *et al*., 2002, p. 27).

That Glasgow has a sizeable number of its population on sickness benefit will arguably come as little surprise. Poor health and high mortality has long been a feature of Glasgow, which has the highest premature death rate in the UK and, in the league table of UK parliamentary constituencies, Glasgow occupies seven of the top ten places for ill-health and premature death (Shaw *et al*., 1999). Glasgow's unenviable record has been further consolidated by a recent report from NHS Scotland showing that as life-span increases across the UK, in parts of Glasgow it is declining. Men living in the UK's poorest constituency, Shettleston, have a life expectancy of 63 years, ten years less than the Scottish average and 14 years less than that for the UK. The Report concluded that the health

gap between the richest and poorest parts of Glasgow was increasing (NHS Health Scotland, 2004; see also Henderson, 2004; Smith, 2004).

It has already been noted that for critics of cultural-led regeneration in Glasgow, this strategy would bring little benefit in terms of reducing levels of poverty in the City, but more importantly that the whole 'cultural city' and 'new Glasgow' narratives would contribute to a worsening of poverty and increasing disadvantage, as well as marginalising their importance as problems requiring more far reaching intervention. As is well known, Glasgow has some of the largest and most intense geographical concentrations of poverty and social exclusion in the UK (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Kenway *et al.*, 2002; Shaw *et al.*, 1999). Research for the Scottish Executive showed that more than half of the City's electoral wards were in the poorest 10% for Scotland as a whole, with around 55% of the entire population living in areas classified as deprived. Glasgow accounts for 16 of the 20 most deprived areas in Scotland (Social Disadvantage Research Centre, 2003). By 2004, Glasgow accounted for 17 of the poorest areas in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2004a). In a recent study comparing 1991 and 2001 census data, researchers from Sheffield University have calculated that 41% of all households in Glasgow live in poverty (Dorling & Thomas, 2004). In relation to child poverty, four Glasgow wards had child poverty rates above 80% in 2001 (Kemp, 2002) and 42% of all school children are entitled to free school meals, rising to over 75% in some parts (Brown & Phillips, 2002, p. 16).

It would have posed little difficulty to fill this entire paper with more damning statistics of a similar hue. This is not a perverse celebration of all that is wrong with Glasgow, or an attempt to show only the 'down side'. However, what the evidence here does show is that claims of Glasgow's 'renaissance' and 'regeneration' are rather questionable to put it mildly.

## Glasgow 1990: Legacies and Questions

The enduring legacies of Glasgow 1990 are all too evident in different and contradictory ways. The pervasive role of the market in the shaping of urban policy is among the most obvious legacies, reflected in a continuing commitment to a market-driven economic growth strategy and a recurring emphasis on marketing, civic boosterism (for instance, Glasgow: European City of Architecture, 1999; the European Capital of Sport, 2003) and 're-branding'. In other respects, arguments that the 'Glasgow Model' can work in generating prosperity and addressing social problems such as poverty have also re-emerged in the new language of 'competitiveness and cohesion' that now characterises discussions of urban policy in the early 2000s (see Turok *et al.*, 2003, 2004).

There are important questions about how we understand place marketing and cultural-led regeneration strategies such as those developed in Glasgow. The idea that ECOC festivals and similar 'flagship' events could do anything but provide a gloss for Glasgow is highly suspect. This is not to argue that they could have 'transformed' Glasgow or were intended to.

However, we need to go beyond this and analyse these strategies as part of a wider neo-liberal and market-driven agenda that seeks to promote regeneration through wealth creation. The developments in Glasgow since the 1990s did not occur in an economic or political vacuum but in the context of a wide-ranging attack on living standards of the less well off. 1990, lest we forget, was a highpoint for Thatcherism (if not Thatcher herself). The neo-liberal urban agenda being driven in Glasgow is also being rolled out internationally. Therefore, it is less an issue of the success or failure of the ECOC and similar strategies, more a realisation that it could be little other than a form of city 'spin'. Glasgow ECOC 1990, together with the other events and awards that the City has received in the past 14 years are not about tackling Glasgow's structural problems, the social divisions, the inequalities and the poverty. Again though we need to go further to recognise the connections, the relationship, between the kinds of urban renewal strategy adopted in Glasgow (and now copied elsewhere across Europe) and the social problems that grip the City today.

In the narratives deployed by those who advocate city marketing and re-imagining, cities such as Glasgow are all too frequently reified and presented as homogeneous locales of common interests. But 'Glasgow' does not 'do' things, it is not an agent and it is not 'Glasgow' that 'wins' or 'loses', or that is undergoing a 'renewal', but particular (and if recent evidence is anything to go by, fewer) groups of its citizens living in particular parts of the City. The type of strategy adopted in Glasgow – 'the Glasgow model' – has contributed to the *worsening* levels of poverty and deprivation and to the deepening inequalities that characterise the City today. It has done this primarily by constructing Glasgow's future – and the future for tens of thousands of Glaswegians – as a low paid, workforce grateful from the breadcrumbs from the tables of the entrepreneurs and investors upon which so much effort is spent in attracting and cosseting – and by marginalising and ruling out any alternative strategy based upon large-scale public sector investment in sustainable and socially necessary facilities and services. While wishing to avoid any romanticisation of manufacturing employment, it is nonetheless notable that this now accounts for less than 10% of employment in the City (source: OECD, 2002, p. 46). There appears to have been little effort to secure quality manufacturing employment of a type that might be attractive to many of those out of work and which might offer full-time, sustainable work of a better quality than that on offer in the 'cappucino' economy that is now such a pervasive feature of the city centre.

Successive academic and other urban 'experts' from around the world have visited Glasgow to cast their judgement on the City and to identify what 'Glasgow needs' (see Darroch, 2002; OECD, 2002; Glaeser, 2004; Tinning, 2004). What it needs, it transpires, is a more skilled and competitive workforce, more flagship attractions, a 'waterfront' strategy (for example the £500 m Glasgow Harbour development currently under construction) and better infrastructure. Addressing the social needs of the City comes a poor second.

As the 'New' Glasgow is presented to the world as a place in which to make a 'quick buck', across the City, community groups, tenants associations and trade unionists continue to struggle against and challenge other aspects of the City's recent 'renaissance', the closure of libraries and other local community facilities, the privatisation of council housing through stock transfer, a 'modernisation' of NHS provision that will see the closure of some hospitals and the privatisation of the City's entire secondary school system. While it would be wrong to suggest that no community groups have benefited from funding and the facilities provided through cultural regeneration strategies, in other ways communities have mobilised to reject public policies in Glasgow. Among the notable episodes of community resistance in recent times, in a City historically renowned for community struggle and protest, was the campaign to save the Govanhill swimming pool from closure in 2001 and 2002, at a time when Glasgow was setting itself up for the mantle of European Capital of Sport, 2003! (www.savourpool.com). Here the contradictions of Glasgow's regeneration are clearly exposed. Having fought in vain against the M77 Motorway development in the 1990s, now community campaigners are gearing up to resist proposals to extend (at massive cost) the M74 Motorway through the heartland of Glasgow's South Side (www.jam74.org.uk) – a proposal, we are informed, that will be 'good for Glasgow' and 'vital for the continuing prosperity of the Glasgow economy' (in a city with the lowest car ownership ratio in the UK).

## Conclusion

Cultural policy played an important role in the vision of a rejuvenated Glasgow economy. This has now taken on added dimensions and a new force under New Labour as 'culture' is now identified as a 'creative impulse' for economic growth (Hughson & Inglis, 2001, p. 459) while the Scottish Executive has highlighted 'culture' as a means of promoting 'social cohesion' (Scottish Executive, 2004b). Similar claims are also made, albeit in a different language, about the role that culture can play in urban regeneration programmes. As Kantor notes, Glasgow's regeneration strategy was effectively an US-style exercise in civic boosterism 'that favour downtown progrowth interests' and which 'diminish attention to considerations of social equity in development' (Kantor, 2002, p. 803). In this sense, cultural led regeneration and image-remaking strategies are part of new city governance, in which different partners are mobilised to work together in managing urban change and 'transformation'. This was a key aspect of the criticisms made of urban cultural policy in Glasgow. While those offered by Workers' City have been widely dismissed, the questions that they posed about Glasgow's cultural regeneration strategies are, I would argue, the key questions that have to be posed in Liverpool today: whose and which Liverpool is being celebrated? Whose story is dominating – and whose story is being marginalised? Who will benefit the most from

the award of European City of Culture 2008? Glasgow and Liverpool are places of contradiction, of division, of inequality, of great wealth and of immense poverty. Liverpool 2008 will benefit some people, as did Glasgow 1990, but is this the only way forward for our cities? At the heart of this entire debate lies the matter of what kind of city we want, and how we achieve it. This is not a simple counterposing of a return to some kind of mythical manufacturing past against the service economy that dominates in both cities today. But it is a posing of questions of power, of who makes the decisions, who is included and who and what is marginalised. Glasgow and Liverpool are wealthy cities, although that wealth is far from evenly distributed. Is it stretching the argument too far to suggest that herein lies part of the answer to the social and economic inequalities that are such a characteristic of both cities today?

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