

# **Media representations of cultural and sports festivals, the marketing of place image and local economic development: The case of Cheltenham, England**

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## Abstract

During the 1980s and 1990s energetic image enhancement and promotional campaigns have been an almost ubiquitous characteristic of different localities throughout the world, with the enhancement and promotion of place image now being seen as a vital part of economic development strategies. One way in which places can be promoted is through the attraction of high profile festivals and events as the coverage of these events disseminates images of place throughout the local, national and international media, potentially reaching a far greater number and range of audiences than conventional promotional campaigns would do. This coverage reaches a number of discrete audiences and has tangible and intangible impacts. These include potential investors whose decisions may be influenced by the images of the location that they receive through the media and the local business community who might be convinced that the economic strategies of the local authority have been successful. The coverage of these events, then, is crucial in selling places to both internal and external audiences. Whilst much attention has been paid to the place promotion campaigns of local authorities, as yet there has been no attention paid to the impacts of the media coverage of festivals and events on the promotion of place images. This thesis draws upon a case study of four festivals in Cheltenham, England and evaluates the contribution of their coverage in the national media to the perception and development of place. This is achieved by a two-stage process: Firstly, an analysis of the content of the media coverage of the selected festivals is undertaken to understand the amount and nature of the coverage. Secondly, the local business community are used as a group of key economic actors to examine their images of Cheltenham, the mechanisms that are important in the construction of image and to identify and assess the impacts that the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals has on economic development. The results make a key contribution to the understanding of the use of the media in the construction of images of place and also in identifying the positive and negative impacts that the media coverage of festivals can have upon a host location.

## Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed ..... Date .....

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1 The role of festivals and events in place marketing**

Selling or marketing a particular geographical locality has emerged as a central part of the contemporary process of inter-urban competition for global capital (Chang, 1997; Young and Lever, 1997). In this competition, place attributes and local cultural identities are often used in the form of 'cultural capital' to project an alluring image to potential residents, investors and visitors. (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Kenny, 1995). The marketing of these images has been seen as a response by policy makers to adjust to the changing nature of the economic structure of Western Europe and North America (Holcomb 1994) as the economies attempt to adjust from heavy industry and manufacturing to a reliance on services or high tech industries. This in turn has an impact upon a place's appeal to potential investors and residents. The older virtues of a central location, cheap labour and low taxes are not abandoned, but much more emphasis is placed upon quality of life issues (Bovaird, 1995).

Therefore, "place marketing images can thus be viewed simply as exemplars of, for example, broader economic and political changes, such as the rise of enterprise culture or postmodernism" (Ward, 1998b p.5). Ward also notes that a common feature of place marketing strategies is investment marketing which includes the refurbishment of cultural attractions such as museums or art galleries, the holding of business conventions and the hosting of major sporting or cultural events. Yet for larger cities, at least, such consumption based activities were also intended to attract not only businesses themselves but also entrepreneurs and investors to live and conduct their businesses in the place being marketed. Bailey (1989, p.3) views this as part of a fundamental shift in the ways that places are promoted as he believes that "the logic that more jobs make a city better is giving way to the realisation that making a city better attracts more jobs".

Places are now instead marketed as a great place to live, as well as a great place to do business. As firms increasingly rely on recruiting and retaining highly paid managers and with technical innovation making business less dependant on the supply of unskilled or semi-skilled workers, so must the city be seen as habitable or consumable by upscale executives and middle-class professionals. This creates an important distinction within the literature on place marketing, as it is being increasingly

recognised that "urban promotion involves the selling of a location not only for business but also as a place to live... these images of lifestyle tend to be predominantly anchored around two things, culture and environment. The use of leisure time is considered an increasingly important aspect of the decision making process for both long-term relocation decisions and short-term (e.g. convention location decisions) business or tourist decisions" (Hall, 1998a, p.127).

In order to attract both footloose industries and highly qualified employees places are increasingly promoting themselves "through the use of imaging strategies in the form of attractive slogans and marketable images as well as through development projects, events and festivals that are in line with the[ir] chosen image" (Chang, 1997, p.547). As Page (1995, p.217) notes, "the development of festivals and special events may make an important contribution to the image of a destination" and therefore may have a significant impact on the economic development of a location".

However, the holding of high profile festivals and events, in itself, may not be sufficient to create positive and enticing images of place to a wider audience and a 'medium' of transmission is required to disseminate images to a broader audience to both challenge and reinforce existing place images. As Hanna (1996 p.633) notes, "representations of places in the media play crucial roles in the development and definition of ... places. Nations, counties, cities and towns depend upon representations to create a sense of community among residents and to present themselves to others" (Boyle and Hughes, 1991; Philo and Kearns, 1993; Rose, 1996).

Similar sentiments are expressed by Barke and Harrop (1994, p.93), in that they believe that "inevitably, the media in all their forms play the most prominent role in the representation and reconstructions of place". Films, television shows, novels and newspapers all contain representations of place and make it possible for governments, businesses and individuals to understand and communicate about places (Hanna, 1996). However, the texts, films photographs and other forms of representation that collectively constitute the media do more than capture aspects of reality and communicate information about them. The media is "threaded into the fabric of daily life with deep taproots into the well-springs of popular consciousness" (Harvey 1984, p.7). The institutions and practices of media are part of popular culture and have an important influence on both individual and societal experience in the world.

The rationale behind the marketing of images of place is based around the concept that images of place are a significant factor in the investment and locational decisions made by industrial and commercial executives (Burgess 1982). It has been argued that image is a critical factor in how buyers buy in the market. Thus people's attitude and actions toward a city are highly conditioned by their beliefs about it, and influenced by depictions and descriptions of it (Fleming and Roth, 1991; Short and Kim, 1998). The intended outcome of place marketing campaigns is to manipulate the behavioural patterns of selected audiences for political and social as well as economic goals (Ashworth and Voogd 1994) with "the perception of cities, and their mental image, becom[ing] active components of economic success or failure" (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990 p.3)

However, there is only limited evidence from some behavioural studies (Taylor and McDermott, 1977; Barr *et al*, 1980) of the process of decision making that point to a significant link between access to information, environmental images and corporate behaviour. Whilst much is known about the content of various conventional place marketing campaigns (i.e. campaigns orchestrated by local authorities and public/private consortia whose remit is within the field of local economic development), little is known about the extent to which these campaigns influence the economic development of individual localities.

## **1.2 The aims of the thesis**

The principal aim of this thesis is to identify what the tangible impacts of place promotion are. This aim can be further broken down into 3 distinct aims:

- To identify and analyse the images of place that are portrayed in the media
- To understand the ways in which the media coverage of a location is important in the construction of place image by key economic actors
- To evaluate the tangible impacts of the media coverage of place on economic development.

This principal aim is achieved through a study of what could be termed 'non-conventional' means of place marketing (i.e. not the 'official' campaigns that are mounted by local authorities and other organisations with the expressed intent of creating enticing images of place) in that it is focused upon a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the images of place that are contained within the media coverage that is received by various festivals and events. Whilst the study places a principal emphasis on the media coverage of festivals and events, the media coverage that occurs outside of that relating to festivals and events is also compared and contrasted to identify the ways in which the coverage compliments and contradicts the images of place that are contained within the media coverage of festivals and events. The thesis also draws upon empirical research conducted with the business community, who are one of the target markets for place marketing campaigns, in order to examine the images of place that they hold, the mechanisms they believe are important in the construction of image and to gauge the extent to which images of place can lead to tangible impacts.

The media coverage of festivals and events is based on a case study of Cheltenham, England. Cheltenham was selected for the basis of this study as there have been recent changes in the composition of the business community, with established national companies either relocating from the town or significantly reducing their number of employees within the town (Gloucestershire Echo, 1999). It is also anticipated that the town's labour force will grow by 7,500 in the period between 2001 and 2011 (Cheltenham Borough Council, 1996, p.2). The town's problems, therefore, are twofold in that it needs to consolidate its position by retaining and fostering growth amongst its existing businesses whilst at the same time attracting new businesses to the area. Cheltenham faces problems, however, in attracting new businesses as it cannot compete with locations that have 'assisted area' status as it is unable to offer financial incentives. Therefore it must rely on its current physical and cultural attributes to entice new businesses into the area and to this end there are a number of high quality festivals and events that take place within Cheltenham each year.

### **1.3 The academic and policy implications of the thesis**

The results from this thesis should be of interest both to academics and also those involved in the marketing of place and it is to these two discreet audiences that it is aimed. The thesis draws upon existing academic literature in the areas of place marketing, media studies, cultural studies and tourism. However, as will be identified

within chapter two, there are several areas where there are significant gaps within this literature and therefore this thesis can make a significant contribution to current knowledge and understanding. The results will also be of interest to both the makers and implementers of place marketing policy as, currently, there have been very few empirical studies that have undertaken to review the impacts that these policies can have upon a host location.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

Chapter Two provides a review of the academic literature broken down into three sections,

- Place marketing and the transmission of images of place
- The media and images of place
- The economic impacts of festivals and events

The first part of this chapter includes a discussion of what place images are, how they are formed and transmitted. Subsequently, this chapter examines the way in which place marketing has changed, the rationale for its current growth and categorises the approaches to the study of place marketing that have been adopted. Central to this categorisation is the argument that the nature of place marketing remains a poorly understood concept by geographers. An important criticism of the geographical literature on place marketing is that it has placed too great an emphasis on the means of production, content and in critiquing the social and cultural aspects of place marketing and has ignored the extent to which place marketing can lead to economic impacts on a host location. Whilst these impacts are referred to within the literature, there is little, if any, empirical evidence that links place marketing to the impacts that it has. Of central importance to this thesis, therefore, is the need to identify the impacts that the transmission of images of place through the media coverage of festivals and events has on a host location.

The second part of this chapter discusses the seemingly neglected role that the media can play in the dissemination of images of place. It examines the limitations in extent and scope of current research into the media and argues that whilst the media is becoming a progressively more important part of how people experience place, there is

little empirical evidence that examines the extent to which media images of place are important for the image construction and subsequent action.

The third major part of the chapter then discusses the increasingly significant role that festivals and events have been accorded in local and regional economic development strategies. It examines the role that culture has been afforded within regeneration strategies and the difficulties associated with the definition and analysis of festivals and events. The final part of the section analyses some of the claims that have been made, but still remain unsubstantiated, in relation to the efficacy of the use of festivals and events as a method of image generation.

This chapter, therefore, examines three discreet sections of academic literature and argues that whilst much has been claimed in relation to the media coverage of festivals and events as a mechanism of place marketing, there is little empirical evidence to support these claims. Moreover, there is a need to challenge some of these claims and assumptions in relation to a specific case study. The implication for research is that by revealing the processes by which images of place are transmitted to external audiences and the impacts that these images of place have geographers can reveal a deeper insight into the way that key economic actors interact with images of place and the impacts that this has for local economic development. The final section of this chapter summarises the literature on the three main themes and identifies the detailed research questions that inform the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Three describes and evaluates the methodological approaches and research techniques used within this thesis. This chapter begins with a review of the main issues and themes arising from the literature review and translates these broad themes into achievable and practical indicators to assist data collection. This chapter justifies the need to incorporate a primarily qualitative technique to examine these issues and examines the practical implications of research to give an insight in the decision making process that took place in regard to the collection and analysis of data.

The chapter then provides an overview of the range of data collection techniques available before evaluating the two main methodologies employed to undertake the study. The first stage of the research is based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the media coverage of four selected festivals that took place in Cheltenham, England.



The second stage is based upon the findings from semi-structured interviews with key informants within the local area to the festivals. This stage forms the core of the research by examining the extent to which the media coverage of a place generally, and its festivals and events specifically, is important for the construction of images of place and identifying the impacts that this image construction has on local economic development.

Finally, the chapter discusses the main procedures adopted for the analysis of both the media reports on the selected festivals and the interview data. The concluding section of the chapter evaluates data quality including the issues relating to 'reliability' and 'validity' of data in qualitative research. This section concludes by addressing a number of ethical issues concerning research into the business community including positionality and representation.

The main purpose of Chapter Four is to give an introduction to the case study area used in this thesis. Issues such as the historical development of Cheltenham, local economic development policies that have been pursued and the saliency of festivals to these policies are identified. The lack of a mechanism for the measuring the impact of these policies is also discussed together with a brief introduction to each of the four selected festivals for this study.

Chapter Five examines the nature and extent of the media coverage of four of Cheltenham's festivals. This chapter addresses a key criticism of the geographical literature, namely that whilst the media coverage that festivals receive is posited as one of the main reasons behind their incorporation within local economic development strategies, little is known about the nature and extent of the media coverage that they receive. First, the amount of coverage is examined for each of the four festivals together with an analysis of the time period over which the coverage takes place is identified. Second, the images of place that are contained within the reports are deconstructed and categorised to identify the key constructs in the images of Cheltenham that are contained within the reports on its festivals and events. The third section takes this analysis and compares it with the images of Cheltenham that are contained within the news reports that are published in relation to the town. The findings presented here highlight some important directions in city marketing activity and raise a number of issues and concerns that are addressed in the subsequent chapters. In particular, several

recommendations are made for policy makers in relation to the use of using festivals as a mechanism to attract media attention to disseminate images of place.

Chapter Six examines the way in which key economic actors in Cheltenham construct images of place, identifies the importance of the media to this process and highlights the way in which these images of place lead to both positive and negative impacts on local economic development. This chapter argues that whilst there are differences in the perception of place between individuals, the mechanisms that are responsible for the production of the images are broadly similar. This chapter, therefore, challenges many of the assumptions that have been made in relation to place marketing and the impacts that it has on economic development.

Chapter Seven provides a summary of critical issues identified in the literature review of place marketing and then makes conclusions regarding the main aims of the project. Second, this chapter qualifies the main findings of the research by evaluating the strength of the conclusions. Section three makes recommendations for policy makers responsible for the management of festivals and the fourth section identifies possible directions for future research on city marketing. The final section reiterates in summary form the key contribution to knowledge of the whole research project.

## **Chapter Two: Review of literature on place marketing, place images in the media and festivals and events**

This chapter deals with three seemingly disparate areas of academic literature with a view to moulding them into a coherent whole that informs this research. Whilst the areas of place marketing, place images in the media and literature relating to festivals and events may seem to have little in common it is only by drawing on all three areas of research that a framework for the study of the way in which images of place contained within festival and event reports in the media can help to shape economic development within a locality. A secondary objective of this section is to identify the gaps within this literature and to highlight the assumptions that have been made but not tested in order to identify the niche within this research into which this thesis fits. As a result, it is argued that the current understanding of place marketing is overly generalised and biased in favour of large metropolitan areas. Central to this proposition is that this thesis draws upon the concerns that whilst the current research seems to indicate that place marketing campaigns have positive impacts upon locations, there is currently little empirical evidence that suggests that this is the case. The final part of this chapter identifies the research questions for this thesis that are informed by the discussion of the literature and the perceived gaps and weaknesses that it has.

### **2.1 Introduction to the marketing of places**

The marketing of positive images of place has become an increasingly important part of the way in which places around the globe compete for businesses, residents and tourists. To this end, place marketing, defined as “the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to target audiences” (Ward and Gold, 1994, p.2), has become one of the central elements of economic development and regeneration strategies (Hall, 1998a). The purpose of this section of the thesis is to provide an analysis of the academic literature on place marketing and aims to identify the following:

- The nature of place images
- The formation of place image
- The transmission of place image
- A history of place promotion
- The rationale behind the growth of place marketing

- The agencies responsible for place marketing
- A categorisation of academic approaches to the study of place promotion

### 2.1.1 The nature of place image

Kotler *et al* (1993) refer to a place's image as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place. The images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with the place. We are, in fact, bombarded daily by images of a myriad of places. These places can be familiar to us or far removed from our experience. Not all of this information is correct or accurate, but may be complementary, supplementary or contrary to the visions of the place that we already hold (Zonn, 1990). Place images typically exaggerate certain features, be they physical, social, cultural, economic, political or some combination of the above, whilst also reducing or even excluding other features (Hall, 1998a). As such, "place images are constructs of reality, they are the result of a dynamic transactional process between humans and places as they are portrayed in different media as well as through the actual experiences of places" (Zube and Kennedy, 1990, p.183).

### 2.1.2 The formation of place image

A theoretical model of how mental images of places are formed is provided by Haynes (1980, cited by Page, 1995, p.222). This process can be expressed diagrammatically:

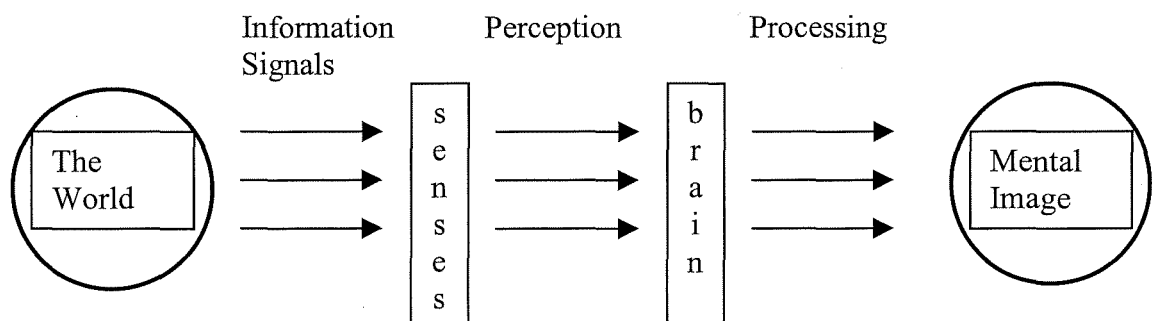


Figure 2-1: The formation of mental images of place (Source: Haynes, 1980, cited by Page, 1995, p.222)

The messages that are received by individuals from external sources are decoded and used in the construction of images. This model also suggests that people's perceptions of individual places can be radically different to the views held on that place by other people as the information that they receive about places is subject to mental processing.

This processing is based on the information about the places people visit and are received through our senses. As the senses can only take in a small proportion of the information that they receive the brain sorts the information and relates it to the knowledge, values and attitudes of the individual through the process of cognition in order to produce a mental image of a place. These mental images are the individual's representation of reality. The significance of this process of image construction is that it can be argued that people base decisions and their actions on their perceptions of reality and therefore potential investors, tourists or residents can be influenced to relocate, expand or visit particular areas by the images of place that they receive through the marketing and advertising of individual locations.

The merit of his model is that it recognises that the receiver of an image is not a passive element in this process. However, it fails to recognise that the information signals that are transmitted by a place can be manipulated by both the people sending them out and also by the medium by which they are transmitted. These subtle manipulations of the components of place image have the potential to have a profound effect on the individual mental images produced and the way in which they are interpreted to form the basis of actions.

### **2.1.3 The transmission of place images**

The transmission of image, like the mental processing of the image referred to above, is selective in that it would be impossible to transmit a place image that would contain an accurate depiction of a place. This is also noted by Ashworth and Voogd (1990, p.79) who claim that "the medium of communication ... is not a natural conduit, but is itself selective, both in terms of what, to whom and to what effect information is communicated". One transmission mechanism that could be used is the media, although as Zube and Kennedy, (1990, p.183) suggest, "Information gained through media must pass through multiple filters. The perceptions and purposes of those creating the image act as filters in the selection, focus and embellishment of the content. The medium selected to portray the place or places is another filter... the resulting images portrayed in the media may or may not correspond with actual physical or social conditions, yet they can have a significant impact upon place". Not only do the images of place that are transmitted have the potential to be different from the 'reality' of place but, there is also no necessary equivalence between the encoding of messages and their subsequent decoding (Gold, 1994, Madsen, 1992) due to the mental processing stages that occur

further on in Haynes's model whereby the images received are interpreted subject to the pre-existing knowledge that people have.

#### **2.1.4 The history of place marketing and the context for its current growth**

Research on the history of place promotion has identified that although place promotion has a long history (Gold and Ward, 1994), contemporary place promotion is distinguished both quantitatively and qualitatively from the past (Holcomb, 1994). For instance, during the period of colonial expansion west European and east coast American newspapers were full of advertisements that aimed to entice migrants to venture into the unknown (Merrens, 1969; Cameron, 1974; Lewis, 1988; Zube and Kennedy, 1990). These campaigns were used to entice new settlers and also used to counter-act some of the popularly-held negative images of the 'new frontier' lands. As such, these campaigns often were based around cities in the 'new' world as having the cleanest water, the most elegant residences, the most vigorous businessmen, the most enterprising entrepreneurs, the healthiest climate and the best location (Holcomb, 1994).

For many authors, however, there was a major change in place marketing in the 1980s, when image initiatives became a more central element of the urban regeneration and economic development process (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Wilkinson, 1992; Gold and Ward, 1994). The context for this new centrality of image marketing to the economic development of cities is the increased competition between cities round the world. This competition has been stimulated by changes in manufacturing production which have resulted in a loss of 2 million jobs (about 10% of all manufacturing employment) in the USA between 1977 and 1993. In Britain the effect was even more pronounced, with 3.6 million jobs lost (about 45% of all manufacturing employment) between 1974 and 1994 (Ward and Gold, 1994).

The result of this major shift is that industry is now driven more by labour costs than the need to be close to markets or pools of skilled labour (Short and Kim, 1998). New footloose industries have also arisen, especially in the high-tech sector which are more concerned with the access to information or areas with high 'quality of life factors' than access to a coalfield or other source of power (Kotler *et al.*, 1993). These profound changes have resulted in a new urban order where jobs and investment move quickly and often, from city to city, up and down the urban hierarchy (Kotler *et al.*, 1993; Leitner and Sheppard, 1998).

These shifts in the pattern of industry have resulted in changes in what is produced and how and where it is produced. Moreover, they have blurred the distinction between public provision for social goals and private production for individual profit. Finally, they have increased the locational freedom of activities, it is not that space is no longer important in locational decisions but rather that a new set of place attributes and fresh definitions of the accessibility of places have become prominent locational determinants for a new set of economic activities (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994).

With many European and North American cities having lost their ability to compete in manufacturing in the context of global economic restructuring in manufacturing (Dicken, 1992; Young and Lever, 1997) places have been forced to re-orientate themselves toward different functions, notably the service sector (Harvey, 1989). However, places with an industrial past have been considered to be “prisoners of their own history and landscape, locked into a framework that is no longer fashionable or marketable” (Dunn *et al*, 1995, p.10).

It is in the face of fierce competition between cities for new inward investment and development opportunities to replace lost manufacturing jobs that image marketing has become increasingly important (Burgess, 1982; Watson, 1991; Wilkinson, 1992; Short *et al*, 1992). The aim, therefore, of place marketing is to contribute to reversing the tide of high levels of unemployment, decaying buildings and rundown housing and restructure the economic and industrial base of localities. Central to this response has been a redefinition of the images of individual places and creation of new forms of identity. As Watson (1991, p.68) notes,

declining regions [have fought] to differentiate themselves and encourage investment from a limited pool of resources, the old geographical attributes of location, land prices and accessibility are shifted from centre stage. Not that these are no longer important, rather that central to the success of the property development industry, and the real estate agents for industrial land is the creation of a myth of unique identity and the packaging of sites invoking distinct cultural images.

This packaging, and subsequent marketing of place, is not only intended for external audiences (i.e. for inward investors both at home and abroad) but also has an importance

for an internal audience comprised of the local business community and residents (Wilkinson, 1992)

The marketing of place image has been increasingly adopted by a number of agencies responsible for economic development in the Western world as they seek to “strengthen the capacity of communities and regions to adapt to the changing marketplace, seize opportunities and sustain their vitality” (Kotler *et al*, 1993, p.18), with cities needing to “constantly position and reposition themselves through the adoption of marketing strategies as a response to this new geography of industry” (Short and Kim, 1993, p.56).

The emphasis that has been placed on place marketing as a response to a declining industrial base and a shift towards a service industry based economy within much of the academic literature may not represent the experience of all locations involved in promoting positive images of place with a view to encouraging economic development however. There are a great many locations that are using the promotion of place image that have little or no industrial base that has declined. Perhaps the best examples of this are the ‘new’ towns within the United Kingdom (Milton Keynes, and to a slightly lesser extent due to it being the ‘birthplace of the industrial revolution, Telford for example). This emphasis on industrial and large metropolitan areas is also present within the academic literature on place marketing as, “putting it bluntly, we really do not know what has happened outside of the big cities” (Millington, 2002, p.40). Taking the United Kingdom as an example again, there have been studies on the place promotion initiatives in the following locations (table 2-1).



Place	Study
Belfast	Neill, 1993, 2001; Neil and Fitzsimons, 1995
Birmingham	Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Hubbard, 1996; Loftman and Nevin, 1995
Bradford	Bramwell and Rawding, 1994
Glasgow	Boyle and Hughes, 1991; Paddison, 1993
Hull	Spooner <i>et. al</i> , 1999
Liverpool	Madsen, 1992
London	Brownill, 1994; Burgess and Wood, 1988; Lyons and Parsa, 1993
Manchester	Bramwell and Rawding, 1994; Harris and O'Toole, 1994; Loftman and Nevin, 1998; Young and Lever, 1997
Newcastle	Clarke, 1993; Wilkinson, 1992
Sheffield	Bramwell and Rawding, 1994; Foley, 1991; Goodwin, 1993; Lawless, 1993; Loftman and Nevin, 1998
Stoke-on-Trent	Bramwell and Rawding, 1994

Table 2-1 Place marketing studies in the United Kingdom (Source: Millington, 2002, p.41)

This dependence on using large metropolitan areas and areas that were once dominated by manufacturing industry has the effect of distorting the picture of place promotion activities. This is not to say that the decimation of the manufacturing base in these locations has not played a crucial role in the growth of place marketing activities, but it needs to be recognised that place marketing is not exclusive to these areas. This, ironically, may be due to the changes in manufacturing that have occurred and the rise in importance of service industries, with the location of offices and production facilities being freed from the past constraints of access to raw materials etc., businesses are now able to pick and chose their location based on a different set of location criteria. Therefore, locations that previously may not have had access to the resources necessary to attract industry are now pitched into the place promotion battle to attract increasingly footloose industries.

The dominance of cities and large towns in the academic literature has the effect of over-generalising the way in which locations have pursued place marketing initiatives as it takes little or no account of the experience of small and medium sized towns. It could be argued that small and medium sized towns have also suffered the impacts of de-industrialisation and the associated closure of component manufacturers or material extraction facilities. The experience of small and medium sized towns also may not be similar as regards the marketing initiatives available to them as they do not possess the

same cultural capital of images that are available to larger locations. The decentralisation of economic activity, however, makes small and medium sized towns important prospective locations for receiving economic activity. Therefore the place marketing policies adopted by small and medium sized towns need to be recognised as an important facet of locational decision making.

### 2.1.5 Changes in place marketing practice

The form that place marketing has taken, however, has not been static over time as there have been a number of subtle changes in how and to whom places are marketed. Bailey (1989) identifies three distinct generations of place marketing which differ in their objectives, methodology and their underlying marketing rationale (table 2-2).

	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Underlying marketing rationale</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> generation</b> <b>Smokestack chasing</b>	Manufacturing Jobs	Luring facilities from other locations	Low operating costs Government subsidy
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> generation</b> <b>Target marketing</b>	Manufacturing and service jobs in target industries (industries enjoying current growth)	Luring facilities from other locations Retention and expansion of existing firms Improving physical infrastructure Improving vocational training Public/Private partnerships	Competitive operating costs Good quality of life (focus on recreation and climate)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> generation</b> <b>Product development</b>	Manufacturing and high quality service jobs in target industries (industries expected to enjoy continued growth in the future)	Retention and expansion of existing firms Support for local entrepreneurship and investment Selective recruiting from other locations Developing technology resources Improving general and technical education	Competitive operating costs Human resources adaptable to future change Good quality of life (focus on cultural and intellectual development)

Table 2-2 Changes in place marketing practice (Source: Bailey, 1989)

The impetus for the transition between generations comes from more and more research into place marketing and economic development. The initial research from the 1980s

changed the way that economic development objectives were set and saw the shift way from what Bailey terms 'first generation' marketing programs which were basically 'smokestack chasing' activities based upon attracting any new businesses to 'second generation' programs which combined a more selective approach based upon targeting specific industries and a greater emphasis on the retention of existing businesses, with the beginnings of related investments to make the host community a more attractive prospect. This new emphasis on the retention of industry came from mounting evidence in the US that the vast majority of new jobs generated in the US came from existing businesses and new business start-ups (Kotler *et al*, 1993) and led to a significant change in place marketing strategies, as place marketers adopted defensive strategies which were designed to hold on to existing firms and residents, which some commentators believed would be more important in the long run than any marginal additions to those attracted from other areas as a result of aggressive external strategies (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler *et al*, 1993). Third generation marketing strategies are a refinement of second generation policies, with the major difference being that a greater influence is placed on the workforce in a location. They are now marketed as a well-educated resource that are capable of meeting the current demands of employers as well as being adaptable to the demands of a changing world. This new emphasis is also reflected in the marketing rationale used, with culture and the prospect of intellectual development being used as a lure to new investors and residents.

#### **2.1.6 Differences between the selling and marketing of places**

Many of the writers on the production of urban images have identified a subtle difference between the concept of place selling and place marketing (Bailey, 1989; Fretter, 1993; Holcomb, 1993; Hall, 1998a). Selling is commonly referred to as a process whereby the seller is "pre-occupied with the seller's need to convert his [sic] product into cash" (Levitt, 1960). Marketing, however, is a process whereby advertising determines, or at least shapes, the product for sale in much the same way as advertisers market perfume or cars (Holcomb, 1994) by attempting to stimulate desire from the target audience. The effect of this is that the product is packaged in relation to what it is believed that the consumer wants. The difference in orientation between the two concepts is succinctly outlined by Schuldson (1984, p.29), in that "selling focuses on the needs of the seller, marketing on the needs of the buyer". Bailey (1989) has claimed that marketing has replaced selling as the principal driving force in urban economic development in the 1980s and that this will continue to be so into the next decade.

### 2.1.7 The agencies responsible for marketing place image

The work of place marketing is carried out by legions of individuals and organisations. They can be found at the local, regional, national and international level (Kotler *et al*, 1993). Whilst some writers have claimed that, typically, place marketing initiatives are a major responsibility of elected officials (Kotler *et al*, 1993) other authors such as Ashworth and Voogd (1994) dispute this, as they believe that local governments have no monopoly over place promotion and that even within local governments there may be different departments who are engaged in promotion that could be mutually supportive, irrelevant or even contradictory.

An outline of the agencies that are involved in image marketing initiatives in Great Britain is has been produced by Wilkinson (1992, p.176).

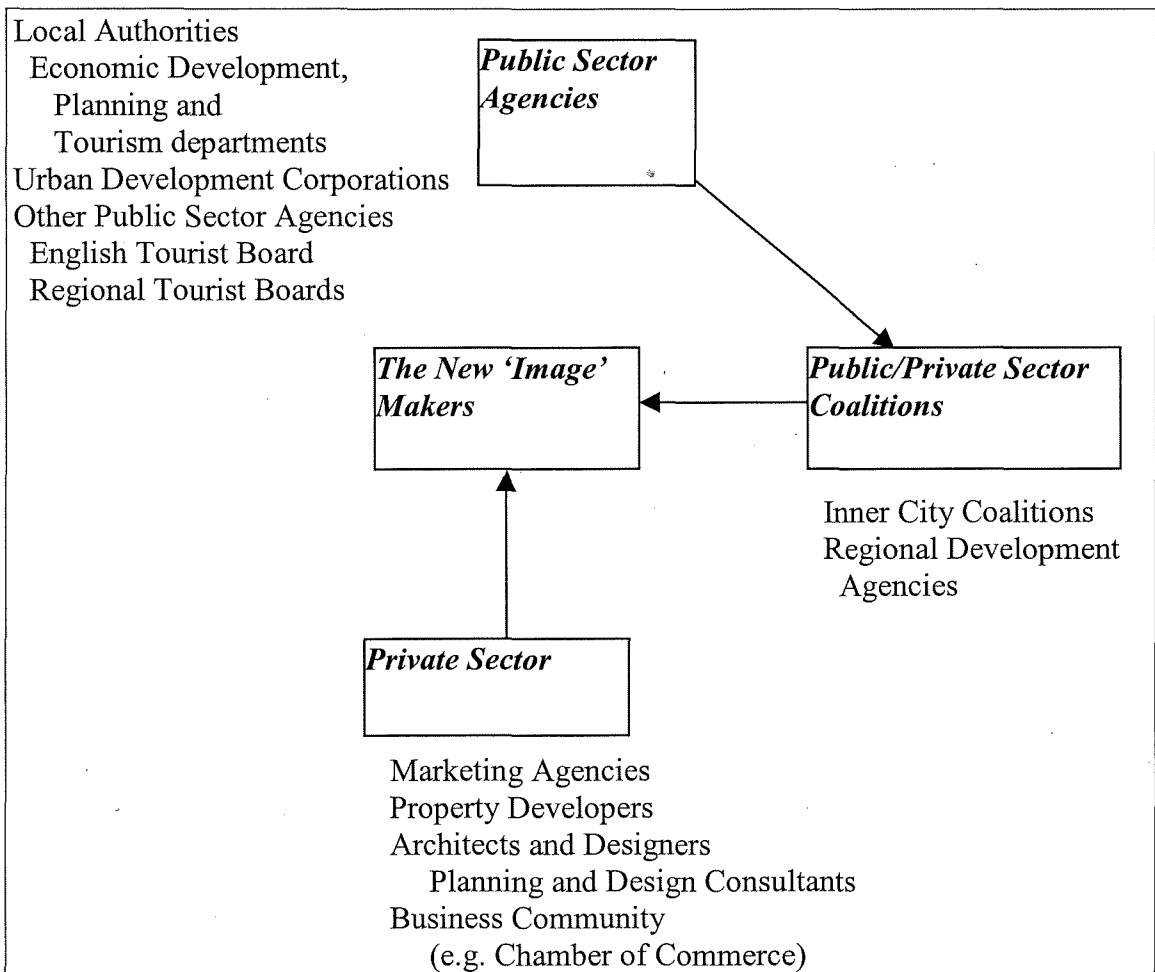


Figure 2-2 Agencies responsible for place marketing (Source: Wilkinson, 1992, p.176)

Kotler and Levy (1969, cited by Page, 1995, p.206) have indicated that public and semi-public agencies have different objectives to the private sector, “with the private sector

being more influenced by direct financial profit". However, as a side note to her model, Wilkinson has suggested that some of the image marketing that is done under the guise of the public sector is done with the collaboration of marketing and advertising consultants from the private sector. The model, however, fails to take any account of any external sources that may influence a recipient's perception of place and assumes that a marketed image can be controlled and distributed in the exact manner intended by any of the agencies responsible for place marketing. This assumption has implications for the study of place marketing because the failing to take account of external agents, such as the media, which are not directly controlled by agencies responsible for place marketing, leaves a substantial theoretical gap in our knowledge and understanding of the way in which people interact with, and subsequently construct, images of place.

## **2.2 Theoretical approaches to place marketing**

There is an eclectic and growing critical literature on place marketing (Bradley *et al*, 2002) (see Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Paddison, 1993; Gold and Ward, 1994; Chang, 1997; Hall and Hubbard, 1998). This literature has attempted to categorise the research into place promotion into either two or three distinct categories. For instance, Short and Kim (1998) identify two theoretical approaches. Firstly, there is a body of literature that links urban marketing to a deeper political economy (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Harvey, 1989; Kearns and Philo, 1993). Secondly, there are studies that focus on the more practical aspects of urban marketing by examining the types of approaches that urban marketers adopt and their relative success (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler *et al*, 1993). This is not to say that these methods are mutually exclusive, and writers often use both, often within the same piece of work, but as Short and Kim (1998, p.55) note, "there are differences in orientation [between the two approaches] with the former emphasising the transformation of urban governance and the involvement of business coalition, whilst the latter focuses on the detailed processes and strategies of urban marketing".

Three different emphases are identified in the study of promotional messages by Gold (1994). The first sees them as part of the production system, viewing the activity of image communication as a manifestation of the specific needs of communicators and as a product of the broader socio-political system. The second concentrates primarily on the message of the media, searching for manifest or latent meanings in the material that is selected. The third highlights audience consumption of media images recognising that

in contrast to traditional approaches to the media there is no necessary equivalence between the encodings and decodings of messages.

However, despite some overlap, there would appear to be eight broad approaches that have emerged in the critical literature on place promotion:

- *Management approaches*
- *Semiotic approaches*
- *Neo-structural approaches*
- *Social justice approaches*
- *Institutional change approaches*
- *Paradigmatical approaches*
- *Consumption approaches*
- *Impact approaches.*

### **2.2.1 Management Approaches**

Authors who have written from this perspective are typically concerned with the effective management of the place promotion process (Ashworth, and Voogd, 1990; Fretter, 1993; Kotler *et al*, 1993; 1999; Page, 1995). Much of this research is drawn directly from traditional marketing literature, such as that by Page (1995) who identifies the three key areas that need to be addressed in the planning and implementation of place marketing; namely, strategic planning, marketing research and developing the marketing mix. An effective place marketing strategy is one that will contain the following stages, “auditing the market, identifying the qualities of the city, developing and shaping the city product and constructing the image of the city” (Page, 1995, p.209).

This approach has also been used to characterise the various types of place marketing that have been undertaken. For instance, Kotler *et al* (1993) have identified four broad strategies that are incorporated within place marketing:

- Image marketing - which involves identifying, developing and disseminating a strong positive image, perhaps contradicting any widely held negative images

- Attraction marketing - which involves organising special events and features to generate publicity, satisfy current residents and attract outsiders
- Infrastructure - promotion of good communication links, social services (schools, hospitals) and recreational facilities
- People - marketing the current population as friendly, skilled and hard working.

### **2.2.2 Semiotic Approaches**

A semiotic approach is concerned with the deconstruction of place promotion texts and new urban images (Burgess, 1982; Eyles and Pearce, 1990; Holcomb, 1993; 1994). This deconstruction has been used as the most common form of analysis of place marketing texts (Ashworth and Voogd (1990, p.108) and is often used to analyse the printed promotional information originating from the marketing departments of local authorities and distributed in response to potential customer enquiries. Typically, this form of analysis has been used to categorise the content of the place marketing material and to compare the content of marketing campaigns between different places.

An example of this technique is provided by Holcomb (1994), who claims that “an examination of these marketing materials reveals striking similarities in the images projected. Cities which are, in reality, distinctly different, become homogenised and virtually undistinguishable in their images” (Holcomb, 1994, p.115). This ‘sameness’ of the content of marketing campaigns is also commented upon by Ward (1998, p.182) who claims that,

many place advertisements are still constructed around the same basic devices. Maps remain common, alliterative slogans have reached epidemic proportions (and are often combined with a linguistic double whammy) hub, gateway and heart remain key words. There is the same underlying attempt to build a mythical vision of a happy and productive land. Infrastructure is invariably ideal, contented, loyal, skilled and strike free workers still people the places promoted. Education is good, housing is good, recreation is good. The surrounding countryside is beautiful. Families are happy and harmonious. The list of businesses which have decided to locate in the town being sold is always impressive. Businessmen still provide authenticated testimonials about how successful they have been since they relocated. Sites, buildings and other incentives are attractive. Only the reader is jaundiced.

Similarly, Leitner and Sheppard (1998, p.286) argue that,

from Pittsburgh to Glasgow, Belfast to Barcelona the collection of images being promoted in newspaper advertisements, glossy brochures, video tapes and world wide web pages heralds a city's superior business climate, technical infrastructure, environmental, recreational and cultural amenities, highly educated, hard working labour force and superior local leadership.

Fretter (1993) asserts that if the name was removed from the cover of the many glossy brochures that are produced you would not be able to identify which place it was that was being described. As previously noted, place promotion is taking place at a time of heightened inter-city competition, where it has become imperative for cities to promote some claim to distinctiveness. However, their efforts, to date, have led to an increasing hegemony of landscapes and images (Hall, 1998).

With the marketing campaigns of individual places having much the same content, layout and presentational style, some authors have questioned the extent to which marketing campaigns render the concept of place as an identifiable and authentic phenomenon as becoming increasingly meaningless (Barke and Harrop, 1994). They argue that what is really being promoted is a kind of placelessness, in the sense that claims made for a specific place may bear only a limited relation to reality or be equally applicable to many other places.

The critique of the 'sameness' of marketing material is in need of further examination. The marketing campaigns that are adopted are often targeted toward a distinct niche and as such this may go some way as to explain the sameness of the marketing campaigns. For instance, in much the same way as there is a great deal of similarity between perfume or car advertisements due to the specificity of the audience at which they are aimed, the marketing of place is aimed at attracting primarily mobile businesses in the tertiary sector of the economy and thus their perceived needs are the factors that the place marketers will promote in order to attract them. As a result, what is promoted will be broadly similar despite the nuances and subtle differences between the places being promoted.

One of the weaknesses in the semiotic approach to the study of place marketing, which is also applicable to many of the other types of approaches that have been adopted, is



the reliance on using the glossy brochures and corporate videos for example, that are issued by agencies responsible for marketing place images as a means of understanding how place images are used as a method of marketing locations. Whilst the analysis of the content of these brochures has raised some interesting and valid points, it would perhaps be a mistake to overestimate their usefulness in the way in which place buyers make their location decisions. For instance, it could be argued that a place buyer may have an idea about a place's image before contacting the agency responsible for economic development and receiving the brochures or other marketing material and this 'pre-marketing material' image may be instrumental in choosing a number of locations to contact in order to receive further information. Therefore, this technique effectively removes the marketing material from its context of both those that produce the material and those who consume it and act upon it (Rose, 2001) and therefore whilst an analysis of the content of marketing campaigns is of some use, without reference to the broader picture its relevance is somewhat limited.

There is also an emerging body of literature (Young and Lever, 1997; Bradley *et al*, 2002) that suggests that the images of place that are contained within the promotional booklets and pamphlets that are produced are rarely a decisive factor in a location decision of either a temporary or more permanent nature. There is, therefore, a need, by both academics and the agencies responsible for place marketing, to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms that the intended recipients of these marketing campaigns believe to be important in the construction of their image of place.

### **2.2.3 Neo structural approaches**

Neo structural approaches are concerned with equating the projection of images of place with the projection of 'false consciousness' over urban populations and the legitimisation of uneven development (Harvey, 1987; 1989; Kenny, 1995; Wilson, 1996; Goss, 1997). Exponents of this approach claim that the dominant images presented in city marketing schemes are not innocent of social authority or political power. The city is written and presented from a particular perspective for a particular audience. The dominant city image is both being produced and consumed in the boardroom by the rich and powerful (Short and Kim, 1998) and that many "city images are detached from urban reality ... promotional rhetoric and visions of community conceal, and partly effect, gross economic and political inequalities and that inner city

landscapes of gentrification and spectacular consumption divert attention from, and partly produce, racialised poverty” (Goss, 1997, p.181).

Sadler (1993) has claimed that the selling of places is actively pursued as part of an attempt to impose an alternative form of hegemony to working class structure. Sadler sees place marketing as a way in which dominant class images can be constructed, reinforced and replicated. The selective nature of promotional images has resulted in conflict with local populations who often view the produced images as alien to the place that they call home. Barke and Harrop (1994) conceptualise this promotion of images of false consciousness as being related to the differences between place identity and place image. Place identity may be regarded as an objective thing, it is what the place is actually like, whilst the image is the way that the place is perceived externally. Conflict arises when there is a noticeable difference between identity of the city that certain groups of people within the city hold and the image of the city that is promoted (for a detailed review of this subject see Boyle and Hughes, 1991). For instance, for local people the identity of a place may be defined and symbolised largely in terms of the past but such representations may be bad news, in marketing terms, for those anxious to attract inward investment. A good example of this is industry, while once industry was once equated with power, skill and pride, it is now more likely to be associated with dereliction, economic decline and pollution (Watson, 1991; Hall, 1997; Short and Kim, 1998).

Harvey (1989) has been even more critical of place promotion and projects of economic development of which it is an integral part, labelling them as the “carnival mask of late capitalist urbanisation” (Harvey, 1989, p.35) the argument being that while such images create the impression of regeneration and vibrancy within cities, they do nothing to address the underlying problems that necessitated regeneration programmes in the first place. Therefore, the aim of urban regeneration strategies is being to mobilize “every aesthetic power of illusion and image ... to mask the intensifying class, racial and ethnic polarisation going on underneath” (Harvey, 1989, p.48).

#### **2.2.4 Social Justice Approaches**

The social justice approach situates place promotion within the inequitable development of post-industrial cities (Ruddick, 1990; Lovering, 1995; Neil, 1995; Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Leitner, and Sheppard, 1998). In the rapidly changing times in which the place

marketers operate, city images need to be continually changed and updated to maintain a competitive advantage. However, as Dunn *et al* (1995 p.158) note, “the re-creating of the identities of a place is an exclusionary process in which the local elite avoid meaningful public participation”. These new identities of place promote a prosperous and cosy lifestyle with all the glamour of the reborn city. It is an image which is expected to appeal most strongly to the consumption power of high income groups attracted by the quality of life and the glamorous urban infrastructure (Wilkinson, 1992), with marketing strategies and promotional imagery commonly giving prominence to attractions most likely to appeal to the comparatively better off and high spending tourists, arts and culture, high profile special events, heritage and heritage attractions (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

Wilkinson also questions the extent to which the power of the imagery creates a psychological barrier to lower income groups who are likely to feel excluded from this new lifestyle. A case study based in Detroit seems to corroborate the fears Wilkinson expresses as, “despite the city’s new skyline, image led development in Detroit, measured against the aspiration of the 1970s of kick starting a more general renaissance, has been an economic failure. The city of Detroit now boasts a collection of image conscious physical capital projects surreally floating amidst a human capital wasteland” (Neill, 1995, p.648).

The allocation of funds into marketing projects has been questioned by Wilkinson (1992). She argues that this is not a cost effective approach to local economic development in the longer term as the constant redirection of funds into advertising budgets could divert resources away from changing the actual physical fabric of the city or placing money into social services. Image improvement initiatives, as Kotler *et al* (1993) note, are too often used as a panacea or a quick fix for a place’s problems, place leaders besieged by failing businesses or a drop in tourism are usually quick to demand a new image. Yet in most instances it does not work if the place has not started to correct its deep seated problems.

This method of analysis has also been used to highlight issues that are missing from the images of place that are marketed. For instance, Sadler (1993, p.182) claims that many of the issues of social conflict and squalid living conditions are carefully removed from place marketing campaigns, thus creating a misleading sense of conflict free growth

which somehow benefits all members of the population. It is not only social conflict which is systematically removed from promotional campaigns, other authors have noted similar omissions; the poor (Short and Kim, 1998), ethnic minorities (Holcomb, 1993) and women (Gold, 1994). The selective nature of promotional images has resulted in conflict with local populations who often view the produced images as alien to the place that they call home.

However, as Hanna (1996 p.636) notes, “all too often, studies of the construction of place images or representations stop there or invoke comparisons to an implicit or explicit ‘real’ in order to prove that a film, television show or book, or newspaper is a misrepresentation” (also see Hopkins, 1994). Although an understanding of the social and technological aspects of place construction in the media is vital and the recognition that representations can be used to serve (often powerful) interests is important, these works stop short of addressing the possibility that the creation of these images re-creates the places being represented. Furthermore, if researchers seek to identify and correct misrepresentations, they are claiming an authoritative position for themselves that is above and beyond the social world in which they are thoroughly embedded (Deutsche, 1991, Jones, 1995) as they are seemingly claiming an ability to produce writings that mirror a reality that is unaffected by their socio-political circumstances.

### **2.2.5 Institutional Change Approaches**

The institutional change approach links the rise of place promotion with changing structures of entrepreneurial urban governance (Cochrane *et al*, 1996; Boyle, 1997). One of the most common discourses on the theoretical underpinnings of the marketing of the city is the link to the emergent types of urban governance which has been referred to as entrepreneurialism (Wilkinson, 1992; Hall and Hubbard, 1996, 1998; Leitner and Sheppard, 1998; Jessop, 1998; Short and Kim, 1998). For Wilkinson (1992), the late 1980s and early 1990s have been marked by a change in the style of, and approach to, place marketing with image initiatives becoming a central part of urban regeneration and economic development. Leitner and Sheppard (1998) directly attribute this change to the pressure to take responsibility for improving the competitiveness of individual cities. This resulted in urban policy makers developing more entrepreneurial strategies and creating new institutional structures of urban governance, commonly referred to as entrepreneurialism.

Short and Kim (1998) claim that urban governance has become less concerned to control and regulate local business and rather more concerned to promote local economic growth. Wilkinson (1992, p.207) believes that these processes exemplify the movement away from managerialist urban governance toward entrepreneurialism. Hall and Hubbard (1998, p.312) claim that entrepreneurial "urban governance has become a stock response to the emotive discourse of urban decline that permeate the urban west" and that the attraction of this discourse lies in that "it absolves the political and economic elite from blame for these problems and limits policy actions by suggestion that only a particular set of externally orientated growth policies will solve their problems". For Jessop (1998, p.77), a new economic consensus has emerged at local and regional level that emphasises cities' need to promote "economic and extra economic conditions for sustainable endogenous development and to market themselves as being business friendly as well as committed to working with the private sector".

Arguments for the beneficial effects of urban entrepreneurialism depend however, on two critical assumptions which Leitner and Sheppard (1998) contend are unsustainable, that inter-urban competition takes place on a level playing field and that cities are like firms. Taking into account the uneven nature of the playing field and the crucial differences between cities and firms, it becomes clear that the widespread adoption of urban entrepreneurialism in an urban system can reinforce inequalities between cities leading all too easily to a zero-sum game in which all cities feel compelled to engage in urban entrepreneurialism even if it leads to a form of inter-urban competition which becomes more destructive than it is constructive. For instance, as Holcomb, (1994, P.121) notes, "if a city has a marketing campaign it may merely equalise the competition with other cities, but all cities bear the costs of marketing. If cities elect not to offer tax breaks or engage in promotion, they risk losing investment and residents to competitors who do". There is also evidence to support this from studies which have examined the way in which place images are promoted by agencies charged with marketing localities. For example, a local authority economic development officer was quoted by Barke and Harrop (1994, p.109) as stating that they engage in marketing activities as "everyone else does it".

Recent research, however, has challenged the incorporation of place marketing within the discourses relating to changing modes of urban governance. It is argued that "the existing literature on city marketing and urban entrepreneurialism has suffered from

structural determinism and over-generalisation” (Millington, 2002, p.300). Whilst Millington’s argument does not entirely reject the inclusion of place marketing within new forms of urban governance, his research demonstrates that there is a significant variation in the practices and conceptualisation of place marketing in many local authorities. In many cases, place marketing activity was only superficial and was done as an afterthought or as a reaction to competitors and thus “provides shallow evidence of the transition to entrepreneurialism” (Millington, 2002, p.301).

### **2.2.6 Paradigmatical Approaches**

A paradigmatical approach to place marketing attempts to situate the growth and content of place promotion initiatives within the prevailing cultural epoch of postmodernism (Kearns and Philo, 1993, Holcomb, 1993; Crilley, 1993). Kearns and Philo (1993) have attempted to incorporate place marketing within the broader scope of the languages of new right capitalism, personified by Thatcherism in the UK and Reaganism in the USA, in that places are not so much presented as foci of attachment and concern, but as bundles of social and economic opportunity competing in the open and unregulated market for a share of the capitalist investment cake. In this discourse places become ‘commodified’, regarded as commodities to be consumed, and as commodities they can be rendered attractive, advertised and marketed much as capitalists would market any product.

Holcomb (1993) incorporates place marketing within postmodernism in that, she claims, that the rise of place marketing has coincided with that of postmodernism as the prevailing cultural fashion. Holcomb argues that this may be more than a coincidence as postmodernism is a perspective, a way of seeing, a way of constructing and understanding the world by deconstructing our experience of it. Postmodernism, Holcomb claims, is eclectic, it juxtaposes, it blends, copies, combines, repeats ideas, attitudes and aesthetic forms. The deconstructed discourse of the packaged newly post-industrial cities replicate the same images, amenities and potentials and contain the same silences with regard to poverty, race and blight. The resultant packaged image reflects the aesthetic tastes of postmodern society with its eclectic conformity, commodified culture and sanitised classlessness.

Crilley (1993) links postmodern architecture to place marketing as he believes that this is the architecture of development, with its facadal displays and penchant for recycling

imagery, it is fully incorporated into the ideological apparatus of place marketing and also plays a major role of facilitating perceptions of urban change. For Crilley, architecture itself has become a form of advertising, with buildings viewed pre-eminently as communicative texts, which like advertisements are culturally encoded, and just as all advertising can be seen as an attempt to persuade potential customers that a particular commodity is worthy of purchase, so does the imagery of architecture in seeking to persuade people of the virtues of urban change.

### **2.2.7 Consumption Approaches**

The consumption impact approach is predominantly a reaction to the perceived gaps within aforementioned approaches, which whilst they identify the content of place promotion messages, the manner in which, and by whom, they are distributed and the social, political and economic milieu in which they exist, they fail to identify the meanings of new urban images for various audiences that receive them (Burgess and Wood 1988; Young and Lever, 1997). Therefore, as Young and Lever (1997) note, there is a potential gap between the meaning promoted by the producers of place images and the meanings that are constructed by the consumers of these images. Young and Lever (1997, p.333), also suggest a definition for the term 'consumption' in that they believe it to be how images are "interpreted and used to form the basis of actions". This gap has further implications when the amounts that have been spent on image marketing campaigns and the numbers of people who are actively involved in marketing places in this way. For instance, a 1995 study claimed that 93% of all UK local authorities were engaged in some form of promotional activity in 1995-1996 and that they had an average annual budget of £279,600 (Millington, 1995).

Typically, consumption based approaches use the 'circuit of culture' hypothesis proposed by Johnson (1986). Central to this hypothesis is the emphasis placed upon "flows of values and information [that] are not simply imposed on passive viewers or readers by media institutions but rather are constructed and reconstructed through the interrelationships of the full range of actors involved in the production, circulation and consumption of those meanings" (Cook and Crang, 1996, p.131). The production stage of the cycle involves the decisions that are made in the initial planning stages of the design of place promotion images. The output of the production stage leads directly to the content stage of the cycle, and thus is the physical text and images that are produced. The final stage of the cycle is the consumption phase and relates to the way in which the

recipients of images react to the images that they receive and how they become incorporated within the image of place that the recipient has.

With specific relation to place marketing, the most comprehensive study of the consumption of place image is provided by Lever (2001) who concludes that place marketing images are more effective in conveying their intended message if the subject matter is of interest or relevance to the recipient. Also, there is some evidence to suggest that the more 'professional' a marketing image is (in terms of production quality) the more likely it is to be favourably received.

There are several limitations, however, to adopting a consumption approach. Central to this is that the consumption of image is primarily a personal experience in that it is something that is internal to the consumer. The study of consumption, therefore, relies on using a surrogate approach in that it is based upon the reactions to a number of stimuli (or surrogates) that are presented to the consumer at a later date. The results are also highly influenced by how articulate the consumers are at eliciting their thoughts about place image and the mechanisms that they believe are important to them in their construction. Moreover, the use of surrogates removes the recipient of the place image from the context in which they initially received the image and this may hamper recollection.

### **2.2.8 Impact approaches**

Whilst there are some studies which combine both the consumption and impact of place marketing strategies (Young and Lever, 1997), there are very few published studies that identify the nature and extent of the impact that place marketing has. This gap, as noted by Bradley *et al* (2002, p.62), is surprising as,

despite all of the rhetoric concerning the supposed saliency and centrality of place promotion to contemporary urban change, there is, to date, little, if any, empirical evidence that this is the case. Put simply, despite the great attention paid to place promotion by academics, we know little of the actual importance of place promotion to the location decision making processes of its intended audiences and less of its tangible impacts on the urban development process.

Whilst place marketing initiatives have been widely posited as a panacea for the problems of de-industrialisation, the results from the few studies that have been



completed are not quite so encouraging. Young and Lever's (1997) study concluded that whilst place image was considered to be the most important factor in company relocations to Manchester when assessed by the body responsible for marketing the city, local businesses considered image to be less important. However, the importance of image was not uniform across all of these businesses and whilst some found it to be of no importance whatsoever, there were companies for whom image was of "vital importance".

Similarly, in a recent study by Bradley *et al* (2002) those responsible for making location decisions of a more temporary nature (meetings and convention organisers) were asked if the image of a location was an important factor in the locational decision making process and over 80 percent of respondents felt that the image of a town or city was either 'important' or 'very important' to the success of a meeting. However, when respondents were asked to rank place image amongst 7 other attributes, image came in as the 7<sup>th</sup> most important factor in choosing a destination. These results suggest that whilst image is undoubtedly important as a factor in the overall process, it remains only one important variable amongst a whole host of others. Similar sentiments are expressed by Young and Lever (1997 p.332) who claim that, "the promotion of place images exist amongst other elements, such as financial packages in attempting to influence economic decision makers. It would be unrealistic to claim that such decision makers would relocate simply on the basis of a place promotion campaign, which is designed to increase awareness about a place. The promotion and consumption of place imagery are thus part of a long and complex process of decision making about relocation".

Whilst there has been little research done in relation to the consumption of place image, even less is known about the impact that the consumption of place images has. This is again surprising when reference is made to the money and effort that are expended upon these schemes by place promoters who have no way of knowing what, if any, success their campaign will have. This problem has been noted by Millington (1995), who believes that, in part, this is due to marketing initiatives lacking clear goals thus preventing them from having a mechanism by which their success or failure can be judged.

This lack of any 'hard' evidence has not stopped various commentators, however, from claiming that the impacts of place promotion campaigns are many and wide ranging.

For instance, Solomos and Back (1995, cited by Short and Kim, 1998, p.70) uses the case study of Memphis, where the local chamber of commerce claim that their marketing campaign was responsible for at least 60% of the 103,000 jobs created since 1985. While Holcomb (1993, p.134) claims that although people have criticised Glasgow's image enhancement campaign of the early 1980's it is "undeniable that the image of Glasgow, both within and outside the city, has been radically reconstructed". In both of these cases the statements may be true, but there appears to be little evidence by which to corroborate these claims.

### **2.2.9 Assessing the approaches to the study of place promotion**

Whilst the approaches to the study of place marketing are many and wide ranging they are, in practice, not necessarily mutually exclusive and writers will often adopt one or more of the approaches within any individual study. The delineation of the approaches, however, identifies that the majority of the work that has been done on place marketing has placed too great an emphasis on the prevailing socio-economic conditions in which they have come into prominence and on the content of 'traditional' means of place marketing. As a result, our knowledge of this phenomenon is far from complete, as we know comparatively little about the way in which place marketing campaigns are received by key economic actors and even less concerning their effectiveness in producing economic benefits. There is, therefore, a need to expand our understanding in these areas and it is into this empirical lacuna that this thesis is addressed.

## **2.3 Place marketing: Summary**

The marketing of positive images of place has been widely recognised as a response to the changing industrial and economic base of Western Europe and North America. Places, it has been argued, are eager to replace the negative images associated with a declining manufacturing sector with positive images designed to attract jobs in the expanding tertiary sector of the economy. However, the current research into place promotion, whilst varied in both scope and perspective, has several gaps which have significant implications in our understanding of this phenomenon:

- The marketing of place image is not exclusive to former industrialised areas seeking to counteract negative images

- There is an over-reliance on using the brochures etc. produced by economic development agencies as a means of examining the role of the marketing of images of place to external audiences
- The consumption of images of place by external audiences is poorly understood
- Whilst it is widely believed to be the case, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that place marketing strategies lead to positive economic impacts.

## **2.4 Place images in the media: An introduction**

The purpose of this section is to identify the way in which geographers and geography have engaged with discourses related to the media and to consider the relationship between the media, place marketing and economic development. Central to this is the way in which the media has been posited as a principal mechanism for the way in which people experience places that are remote to them.

Despite the media seemingly becoming more and more integrated into everyday life in the developed world via an increasing number of television channels, radio stations, newspapers and the Internet, little is understood about how the media distributes images of place, how these images are consumed, and what, if any, impact the consumption of these images has. This may, in part, be due to the relative inattention that the media has received, for as Burgess and Gold (1985 p.1) note, “the media have been on the periphery of geographical enquiry for too long”. This inattention may be, in part, due to the media’s very ordinariness, with television, radio, newspapers, fiction, film and pop music being such a common part of people’s everyday life that it has perhaps masked the media’s importance as part of people’s geography. The media has become “threaded into the fabric of daily life with deep taproots into the well being of popular consciousness” (Harvey, 1989, p.137) and therefore the institutions and practices which comprise the media have a significance that demands our attention. They are an integral part of popular culture and, as such, are an essential element in moulding individual and social experiences of the world and in shaping the relationships between people and place.

In terms of the sheer numbers of people who consume different media products in everyday life, the general inattention given to the media by geographers is surprising. In the UK, for example, 98 per cent of households have at least one television and the total

number of people purchasing a daily newspaper is in excess of 10 million, a considerable underestimate of the numbers of people who actually read them (Sparks, 1987; Negrine, 1989). It seems reasonable to ask, therefore, why the majority of geographers so consistently fail to recognise the significance of the industry which over the twentieth century has come to dominate public communications through its selective provision of information about relationships between different groups in society, their economic and political processes and their relationship with the built and natural environment (Burgess, 1989).

#### **2.4.1 Research into place images in the media**

Although geographers are increasingly using various media sources as a mechanism for understanding both pattern and process in modern society (see table 2.2), academic research into the influence of the media has been limited both in its extent and its scope. For instance, Burgess (1990, p.40) notes that, "the production and consumption of meanings in the mass media and advertising have not yet attracted much attention". Although "our experience of place is now thoroughly mediated by what we read and what we see on television" (Jackson, 1989, p.376) the media have only recently begun to be closely scrutinised by geographers. Therefore, whilst the media is receiving increasing attention from geographers, there is a lack of substantive research that focuses on the link between what is presented in the media and how it is subsequently consumed by audiences.

The nature of academic investigation into the role of the media into the production, dissemination and consumption of images of place has been criticised for often being too simplistic or naïve as whilst "over the last 15 years, there have been various occasions on which geographers have acknowledged the importance of the media, but, by and large, the quality of the ensuing analysis has been inadequate" (Burgess and Gold, 1985, p.5). One reason which could account for this perceived inadequacy is the focus that has been placed on the analysis of the content of media messages to the exclusion of an analysis of the meanings that people construct from the media images that they receive (Jackson, 1993; Thomas, 1994).

<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Overview of research</b>
Escher and Zimmerman	2001	The role of landscape in film
Kennedy and Lukinbeal	1997	Using films as a research tool
Jones	2002	Spatial distribution of music production
Saldanha	2002	Creating a critical geography of music
Sharp	2000	Links between geography and literary fiction
Howell	1998	The geography of crime fiction
Phillips et al	2001	Media constructions of rurality

Table 2.3 Geographical research into the media

#### **2.4.2 Types of media coverage**

Much of the research that has been conducted into media images of place has been concerned with identifying the characteristics of individual places that are contained within media reports. This research emphasises two different dimensions to the coverage that places receive: nature and quantity (Manheim and Albritton, 1984; Avraham, 1998).

The quantity dimension refers to the amount and visibility of the coverage that a place received in the news media. Factors examined include such details as number of reports about the place, on what page or section the articles appear, the article's size (in the press) or the length of the report (in television news) and so forth. These studies are primarily quantitative in nature and often based on counting the total amount of words used, airtime given, occurrences of certain words or phrases within text or typifying the types of images used. Whilst these studies do offer a guide to the type of coverage that places receive the quantitative nature of enquiry removes the data from its context of both the means of production of media reports and the way in which they are received by audiences. Therefore, whilst these studies are useful in that they provide a background to the way in which places are covered in the media, the amount and regularity of their coverage, they tell us little about the way in which they have an impact upon the places that are represented.

The nature of the coverage that places receive is often arrived at by the use of a more qualitative mode of study, with media reports being deconstructed, compared over a

certain time period or by using a different variety of media. Research into the nature of place images in the media often makes reference to several individual factors (Dominick, 1977; Larson, 1984; Graber, 1989):

- Which subjects are most frequently covered from the place (e.g. crime, poverty, social and community events)
- The way that the place is described in reports
- Who is represented as being responsible for the events that are covered
- Who is quoted and what is the source of the information reported.

In this dimension, the studies examine the media images 'beyond the numbers' in that their authors are looking for stereotypes, generalisations and myths which appear in the coverage of certain places (Van dijk, 1988; Shields, 1992; Avraham, 1993). Also important to these studies are the construction of power relations through the media reports on place as an emphasis is placed upon those that are responsible for providing the direct quotes and other items of primary 'evidence' in order to lend additional credence and authority to the article.

An analysis of the nature of media coverage led Avraham (2000) to conclude that within every nation there are four types of city coverage patterns:

- Cities that receive a great deal of negative coverage
- Cities that are ignored by the media, unless they are being covered in a negative context
- Cities that receive much positive coverage
- Cities that are ignored by the media, but when covered receive primarily positive coverage.

Whilst the distinction between the four types of coverage provides a useful starting point for analysing the way in which the media covers place, the emphasis placed on cities, in a similar fashion to the majority of the literature on place promotion, contains a spatial bias in favour of larger city areas. Whilst it could be argued that many items of national and international significance routinely take place within large city areas, the

neglect of the way in which small, medium and large towns are covered is a serious oversight in the literature.

An alternative way of conceptualising the way in which the media covers locations is to create a distinction between 'rich' image and a 'one dimensional' image (Avraham, 1998). Places with a rich image in the news media are places that receive coverage on a wide variety of subjects and events that happen in them, such as politics, economics, social events and cultural developments. Places with a one dimensional image are those that only receive coverage when events of a certain nature take place within them, such as crime or disasters. When a place is labelled by the media in being one in which only a certain type of activities and event occur, it becomes a symbol of such events. As a result, other events and activities do not get covered (Strauss, 1961; Shields, 1992).

However, whilst we know a great deal about the way in which places are portrayed in the media, we know relatively little about the way in which the recipients of these images react to them. Therefore the construction of place image from the consumption of media images and the potential that these images have for economic development is perhaps the largest gap that exists within geographical understanding of the role of the media within geography. Although current academic investigations mention the media, give a general indication of their function, they do not explore their contribution nor, ultimately, provide convincing accounts of the forces which condition and shape media involvement in episodes of urban restructuring (Thomas, 1994).

#### **2.4.3 The media and construction of images of place**

The media can be an essential component of how people construct place images and cognitive maps (Kariel and Rosenvall, 1978; Gold, 1980). The role of the mass media in this process is crucial, while people usually become aware of occurrences in their immediate environment from direct contact with the events, they learn about events that occur in more distant places primarily from the media. Information about a far away place is not considered crucial to most people and thus they do not attempt to locate firsthand responses to verify what happened there (Kunczic, 1997). For this reason, the 'reality' that the media transfers from distant places is conceptualised as the 'objective' or 'true' reality by those who do not live there (Adoni and Mane, 1984; Burgess and Gold, 1985).

The role of the media in the creation of images of place is therefore crucial as the media forms part of a complex cultural process in which meanings are produced and consumed (Burgess and Gold, 1985; Burgess, 1990). Reality is constructed through shared, culturally specific, symbolic systems of visual and verbal communications and the media play a fundamental role in the construction of this reality, by selectively providing knowledge about the lives, landscapes and cultures of different social groups. Therefore the media industry can be seen to be participating in a complex cultural process through which environmental meanings are produced and consumed (Burgess, 1989).

Images of places in the media are transferred through 'opinion makers' and distributed by journalists via the use of stereotypes (Relph, 1976). The research on the content of media reports often contain a distinction between place images and place stereotypes and this distinction is crucial for research of this genre, for it implies that images are constructed essentially from firsthand experience and are information rich whereas stereotypes, on the other hand, are highly simplified generalisations about people and places which carry with them explicit implicit assumptions about their characteristics and behaviours. By implication, this research suggests that there is a subtle difference between a place image and a place stereotype, with stereotypes being constructed from third party sources of information which could include the media.

The centrality of television in our lives during the last decade has increased the use of stereotypes of places as crises in distant places only receive a few seconds of coverage and many of the reports are superficial, lacking both background and commentary, and thus they are based upon, and reinforce stereotypes and contain distortion (Elizur, 1994). Whilst these stereotypes may seem innocent snapshots relating to a place's identity they have the potential to define a place to a wide audience of media viewers, and whether they are positive or negative in nature they are often resistant to change.

An example of this is given by Burd (1977, p.1) as he believes that "in a very real sense ... a city becomes the image that the media projects". Yet the images that the media project are not static and are flexible over time. Whilst the images related to a specific place may be flexible over time myths created around a place, be they positive or negative, continue to exist for years. For example, city leaders in Northern England believe that they need to fight against stereotypes created in the nineteenth century



about their lifestyle and still exist within the minds of people in the central and southern parts of the country (Burgess, 1982; Walker, 1997).

The power of the media to convey images of place has also resulted in efforts by many cities to have themselves featured or associated with television programs or films. The images contained within these productions can, potentially, reach a far wider and far greater audience than any conventional promotional campaign could do. As a result the British Film Institute maintains, in conjunction with the Tourist Information Office, a central website (<http://www.bfi.org.uk/gateway/databases/index.html#locations>) that contains location details of a number of high profile films and television series (e.g. *Inspector Morse*, *Trainspotting*, *Sliding Doors*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and *Peak Practice*) so that people can visit the areas that they see on the screen.

The media can play an important role in the dissemination of images of place, and as such it cannot be considered that urban managers and other parties who are concerned with the production and promotion of positive images of place with a view to either counteracting negative images or maintaining positive images can exercise complete control over the images that are produced as the media are an external factor beyond their immediate control which can help to shape a place's image. The media also has the ability to change images of place relatively quickly through the dissemination of news stories about a particular place. Kotler *et al* (1993) have used the example of the Rodney King assault in Los Angeles to demonstrate this point, as this carried unfavourable images of the city around the world and was responsible for undoing a lot of the image recreation initiatives that had taken many years to plan and implement. Almost immediately tourist numbers in Los Angeles fell which had a significant impact on the economic fortunes of the city. Similarly, Zelinsky (1994) identifies the case of Los Angeles that fell from sixth to fifteenth in terms of the number of convention participants between 1964-1965 and 1990-1991. The cause, identified by an officer of the Los Angeles Convention and Visitor Bureau, was put down to the long run of negative national press coverage that the city had received.

#### **2.4.4 The media, consumption of place image and the subsequent creation of meaning**

Media communications can be conceptualised "as a circuit of cultural forms through which meanings are encoded by specialist groups of producers and decoded in many

different ways by the groups that constitute the audiences for these products” (Burgess, 1989, p.139). However, in saying this there is no necessary equivalence between these sets of encodings and decodings. Rather the media are engaged in ideological work through the activities of interests both external and internal to the industry, which attempt to ensure that their preferred meanings are interpreted in the way intended.

In order to understand the cycle of production and meaning it is useful to think of it as a circuit of production, text and consumption (Johnson, 1986; Burgess, 1992). At each stage of the circuit transformations occur, transformations of both meaning and the form that the message takes. For instance, a story containing factual information may transform this information into graphs or pictures, quotations may be used that only reflect the media’s ‘preferred’ interpretation of events and neglect other viewpoints which may be contradictory. The circuit of production, text and consumption, however, can only be completed when media texts are consumed, that is, when they are purchased and read. A second transformation occurs as consumers ‘decode’ or make sense of newspaper reports. There is no necessary equivalence between the meanings that are encoded in the text and the meanings that different readers will decode from these same texts. Preferred readings may be accepted by readers, but, just as often, they will be resisted, subverted and contested (Hall, 1980; Morley, 1995). The characteristics of audiences play a profoundly important role in determining how people interpret media discourses, making sense is “ a function of a complex environment, that of personality of the family, the neighbourhood, of work, of ideology” (Silverstone, 1985, p.182). The multiplicity of types of personal experience, context of receiving a message can result in many different subsequent decodings of messages (Radway, 1995). The circuit is completed as diverse aspects of environment, economic, social and political contexts within which people live and the activities in which they participate provide the basis for the further transformations in the productions of news.

#### **2.4.5 The circle of reproduction of media images**

As hinted at above, the relationship between the media and the consumers of media images is not a one way process of the dissemination of information and the subsequent construction of place image. The consumers of media images can also play an important role in the production of future media images of place. Johnson (1986) describes this process of the production and consumption of meaning as a circuit of culture. Transformations of meaning, reflected in changes of form, occur at different phases

include the production of the text by media personnel operating within the constraints of particular economic formations, the text itself, which transforms the production process into a system of symbols, both linguistic and visual depending on the particular medium; the consumption of the text by audiences who will inevitably produce different readings of the same text, readings that will reflect issues such as gender, class and ethnicity and the incorporation of those meanings into people's daily lives. These, in turn, provide the material for new media productions. The circle can only become complete at this final stage, whereby the way in which people use media images to construct images of place are integrated within future media reports. For instance, the integration of 'new' images within media productions could include examples from popular culture such as the way in which comedians such as Jasper Carrot have satirised images of Birmingham that subsequently become adopted by the mainstream media (e.g. television and the print media) and subsequently become part of the image that becomes associated with place.

#### **2.4.6 The media, place image and economic development**

The media image of place is becoming increasingly important to those parties responsible for managing economic development strategies as "mayors, urban planners and policy makers are all concerned about their city's coverage patterns in the news media. These decision makers tend to accuse news people of distorting their city's images by means of news definitions that focus mainly on negative effects such as crime, violence and social problems while ignoring positive events and important developments" (Avraham, 2000, p.363). This concern on the part of the key decision makers demonstrates their belief that the way in which the media constructs images of place and the way in which these images are consumed are a key determinant in the economic fortune of specific localities.

However, whilst it is generally recognised that images of place contained in the media have the potential to act as a compliment to 'traditional' place marketing schemes, there is a lack of empirical evidence to substantiate these general claims. Overall, as Avraham (2000, p.363) notes,

it is surprising that the [media] images of cities do not receive more attention, as they are important and have a considerable effect, along with other factors, on the ability of cities to change their position in the growing national and global competition for various resources. A city's position in

this competition might be affected by its image because people will usually hesitate to invest in, move to, or visit cities that are covered mainly in relation to crime, poverty and social disorder. The importance of a city's portrayal in the national media stems from our belief that such images affect these groups, the general public, the decision makers on a national level and place's inhabitants

For the general public, the image of cities can affect a number of decisions, including those relating to places to re-locate to, either on a temporary basis as tourists or on a more permanent basis in relation to migrating to a new job (Burgess, 1982; Gould and White, 1986; Judd, 1995). For national policy makers, media images can affect decisions regarding revenue grants, capital and resource allocation and legislation (Walker, 1997). In addition, the external image of places can have an impact on the self image of the place's inhabitants and can also shape their relations with the inhabitants of other places (Galician and Vestre, 1987; Kosicki, 1989; Ettema and Peer, 1995).

The potential of attracting media coverage for an event has also been seen as one of the principal reasons why major cities have chosen to bid to host prestigious tournaments such as the Olympic or Commonwealth games (Bentick, 1986; Burns *et al*, 1986; Hall and Selwood, 1989; Hillier, 1989; Foley, 1991; Gratton *et al*, 1996). However, whilst the attraction of a large television audience with the associated opportunity for a location to present its 'best face' to the cameras for a short, but intensive, period of time, is often given as one of the main reasons for gambling local tax payer's money on developing the necessary infrastructure and associated marketing campaign in order to succeed in the bidding process, little is known as regards the effectiveness of this exposure on producing the benefits in terms of image dissemination that policy managers intend.

Those responsible for pursuing economic development in individual locations have also been criticised for not exploiting the media to create and maintain positive place images. For instance, Neill (1995, p.649) cites the case study of Detroit in the United States and asserts that, "there is also credibility to the charge that Detroit under Young (the city's Mayor) paid insufficient attention to using the media to market a more positive side to the city, including its development achievements. Other cities, such as Cleveland and Pittsburgh which have improved their image and have targeted the media with positive stories".

The media coverage of a location is also used as a performance indicator by several local authority economic development departments in the UK (Millington, 2002) in order to gauge the success or otherwise of their regeneration policies. The performance indicators that they use are, for example, the amount of editorial coverage gained, the amount of coverage (in column inches), exposure (in terms of time) on television and the number of press visits to the area.

#### **2.4.7 Summary: The media, construction of image and place marketing**

Despite the ubiquity of the media and the media being largely acknowledged as playing an important part in people's everyday experience of a wide ranging number of locations from around the world there has been a surprising neglect as regards empirical research into the way in which these images are used as a mechanism for the basis of the construction of an individual's images of particular places. As a result, whilst much of the research highlights the importance of the media as a conduit for the transfer of images, we know little about the way in which the images that are transmitted are consumed and used as the basis for decisions.

There are, however, a number of suggestions within the literature that are central to the argument of this thesis. For instance, Burgess (1990) suggests that geographers should work much more closely with the different groups of people who buy, read, watch, enjoy, worry about and are angered by the enormous range of media products they encounter in everyday life. More simply, Avraham (2000) notes that there is a lack of knowledge about the connection between the media images of cities and their perception among the general public. Questions that remain to be answered include; to what extent does media coverage, be it positive and negative, affect the public image and how does the media coverage affect the decisions that people make about place?

### **2.5 An introduction to festivals and events**

The attention of commentators has been drawn to the increasingly significant role that festivals and events are accorded in local and regional economic development strategies (Atkinson and Laurier 1998). However, the academic literature on the subject is fraught with definitional problems with several different terms being used, often interchangeably, to describe festivals and events. There are also some significant gaps within the literature and several assumptions have been made which have not been thoroughly tested. The purpose of this section, then, is to discuss the varying terms and

definitions that have been used and also to identify some of the claims that have been made in relation to the centrality of festivals and events to the place marketing process. Finally, some of the claims relating to the impacts of festivals and events are reviewed and the gaps that exist within this literature are identified.

### **2.5.1 The development of festivals and events as a means of place marketing**

Whilst the traditional impetus for many festivals was traditionally a time of celebration, relaxation and recuperation which often followed a period of hard physical labour; sowing or harvesting crops for example (Rolfe, 1992), there is a growing belief that festivals can bring a competitive edge to a city, a region or a country as a source of creativity, a magnet for footloose executives and their businesses, and as a means of asserting civic, regional or national identity through the quality of cultural life (Myerscough, 1989). This mobilisation of festivals to the cause of place marketing is one of the most recent ways in which cultural policies have become an established and legitimate part of urban regeneration strategies in Europe. They have become increasingly important complementary factors in the competition between places which possess similar advantages (Bianchini, 1993). There are several overlapping objectives in festivals that are not always compatible. These included raising the city's profile and its ability to attract tourists, using cultural facilities to make a location an attractive place for people to move to, creating employment by investing in and developing local cultural industries and making cities better places for people to live in.

The use of festivals as a method of creating new images of place is situated within the sphere of the increase in use of cultural policies aimed at fostering local economic development and at supporting marketing strategies, which in the 1980s and beyond, enjoyed a remarkable degree of political consensus at both national and local government level (Bianchini, 1993). Central to these policies was the use of a very broad based view of culture which was energetically exploited by politicians and policy makers to assist in the transformation of local economies and to soften the social impact of restructuring of the economic base. Cultural policies were central to economic development policies, but were also used to assist in physical regeneration strategies through the construction of festival squares and festival halls in order to boost tourism and to counteract negative images typically associated with old industrial areas (Ekman, 1999).

The increased use of culture as a means of combating the legacy of industrial decline is significant as it reflects the belief among many commentators and government bodies that the cultural realm is destined to play an increasingly important role in the future development of localities (Griffiths, 1995). For example, a recent study showed that 79% of local authorities had recently established arts, cultural or sporting events. Further analysis of the data showed that the geographical scale of attraction of these festivals was evenly spread from international through national to local (Millington 2002).

The aim of these policies that use festivals and events within the broad definition of culture can be twofold. Festivals and events can assist in promoting economic regeneration by adding to the social vitality and attractiveness of a region and boosting the self-confidence and pride of its people (Rolfe, 1992). However, a location that wishes to upgrade its infrastructure or its political image can also use a large scale event as a tool to generate funds from higher levels of government (Bonnemaison, 1990). These dual aims, therefore, have prompted many locations to use festivals and events as parts of an arts or cultural policy to encourage economic development by attracting new businesses, tourists and residents. Consequently, festivals and events should not be conceived as a merely symbolic aspect of economic regeneration but as material shapers of locations (Whitt, 1987).

The purpose of this section is to review the relevant literature on festivals and events, to examine the way that they have been defined, to identify the inherent problems and contradictions within the definitions that have been used, to reflect on the theoretical underpinnings of the use of festivals and events as a tool for economic development, the way in which the media is an essential, and often neglected, mechanism for dissemination of information about the festivals and events and the location in which they take place. The impacts that festivals and events can have on their host location are also identified together with the critiques that have been made in relation to using festivals and events, and in a more general sense, the arts as a vehicle for economic regeneration.

### **2.5.2 Defining festivals and events: The distinction between a festival and an event**

A distinction between the terms festival and events has been arrived at by The Canadian Government Office of Tourism (1982, cited by Hall, 1992). The primary differentiating

factor is the frequency of the event being referred to as festivals are defined as a phenomenon that occur every year, while events take place as one time only occasions. However, Tourism South Australia (1990, cited by Hall, 1992) believe that identifying a difference between festivals and events based purely on this one criteria is too simplistic a determining factor and that there is a need to determine between the two categories based upon on the nature of the public attending. Instead they suggest that for a festival, the public are participants of the experience, while for events the public are spectators to the experience.

## **2.6 A typology of events**

The literature relating specifically to events contains three distinct terms that are used to describe this particular phenomenon. The terms special event, mega-event and hallmark event are used frequently, however, whilst they claim to be distinct sub-genres within an overall framework of events the differences between them are often so small that the categorisation between them adds to the confusion rather than providing a basis to understand the types of events that take place.

### **2.6.1 Mega-events**

Mega-events have been categorised as the largest events that take place. The 1987 congress of the Association Internationale d'experts Scientifiques du Tourisme (cited in Marris, 1987, p.3) resolved that mega-events could be defined in 3 different ways;

- By volume - 1 million visits
- By money measure - Can \$500 million, DM 750 million, French F2,500 million (at 1987 levels)
- In psychological terms - that the event has a reputation of 'must see'

Whilst the first two measures that are used are simple to employ in the study of mega-events, the psychological determinant is perhaps overly subjective and vague for it is not made clear for whom or for how many must an event have the reputation as 'must see' before it qualifies as a mega-event.



### **2.6.2 Hallmark events**

The majority of academic writings on events have been concerned with what have been termed 'hallmark events' with the definition provided by Ritchie (1984, p.2) being used as a standard, in that "Hallmark events are major one time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term".

A number of different types of hallmark event have been identified by Ritchie (1984, p.2) who has classified them as follows;

- Worlds fairs/expositions
- Unique carnivals and festivals
- Major sports events
- Significant cultural and religious events
- Historical milestones
- Classic commercial and agricultural events
- Major political personage events

A primary function of the hallmark event is to provide the host community with an opportunity to secure a place of prominence in the tourist market for a short, well defined, period of time (Hall and Sellwood, 1986) In many cases, hallmark events are part of a strategic response to the seasonal variations in demand of the tourist industry (Ritchie and Beliveau, 1974). However, hallmark events can also be seen to be significant as they can leave behind legacies that can impact upon a host community far more widely than the immediate period in which the event takes place (Hall, 1992).

### **2.6.3 Special events**

Special events have been defined by Getz (1989, p.125) as "a unique form of tourist attraction, ranging in scale from mega-events such as the Olympics and world's fairs, through community festivals, to programmes of events at parks and facilities".

Special events are distinguished from other events by the use of the following criteria;

- Special events are open to the public

- Their main purpose is celebration or display of some theme
- They occur once a year or less frequently
- They have predetermined opening and closing dates
- Permanent structures are not owned by the event
- The programme consists of one or more separate activities
- All activities take place in the same community or tourist region

From the perspective of the event visitor, special event presents an “opportunity to participate in a collective experience which is distinct from everyday life” (Getz, 1989, p.127). Much like hallmark events, special events are often staged as a means of obtaining broader goals, such as expanding the traditional tourist season, to spread tourist demand more evenly within a certain area or to create a favourable image.

#### **2.6.4 Defining festivals and events for the purpose of this thesis**

The distinction between what constitutes a festival or an event and how they can be further sub divided into special events, mega events or hallmark events is somewhat subjective and there seems to be a great deal of overlap between each of the categories. Each of the categories include an evaluation of the spatial extent of their particular type of ‘event’ and a great deal of the events that are claimed as being special, hallmark or mega could quite easily be accommodated within one of the other categories. Similarly, claims are made about the type of audience that each one of these categories of events attract and, once again, the dividing line between each of the definitions is, at best, vague. Perhaps, more importantly, the claims that are made for the positive benefits of each of the individual types of event have much in common. Each of them claim to have the ability to generate positive impacts both directly from the holding of the event in terms of numbers of visitor spend but also in the creation of positive images of place which may have an impact on a location long after the event has finished. Therefore, it is proposed that these distinctions be put aside and that for the remainder of this thesis that the umbrella term ‘festivals’ is used to cover these events.

### **2.7 Theoretical underpinnings of the use of festivals as a tool for economic regeneration**

The contemporary promotion of festivals can be defined as one strand of local economic policy that is used to cushion the negative effects of the painful transition from an

industrial to a post-industrial economy (Booth and Boyle, 1993). In this model, festivals are incorporated within the language of economics, with the attendant measurements applied to policy analysis: investment, leverage, employment, direct and indirect income effects, social and spatial targeting and so forth. Festivals are then bundled up with business services, with tourism, with the leisure industries as part of a narrow definition of urban regeneration driven by the objectives of employment creation and retention. These policies are used as part of a local response to the globalisation of capital and the political necessity to marshal all available resources to attract and to hold international investment.

Festivals become a strand of place marketing, with cities vying against other cities to flaunt their ownership of top quality events, museums and galleries, fine architecture, symphony orchestras or rock musicians. Depending on the audience, a city's festivals are packaged and re-packaged to become an incentive for the potential investor, property developer, potential tourists or potential residents. In doing this policies relating to the holding of festivals have become a significant component of physical regeneration strategies in many western European cities, with a lively, cosmopolitan cultural life is increasingly being seen as a crucial ingredient of city marketing and internationalisation strategies designed to attract mobile international capital and specialised personnel, particularly in the high-tech industrial and advanced services sectors.

Places, however, have not all followed the same path in the way that festival based initiatives have been employed to help remodel their images and find new economic roles. One approach to make theoretical sense of this differentiation has been through the elaboration of typologies. For example, it has been suggested (Bianchini, 1991; Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Griffiths, 1993) that a number of models can be identified, reflecting different political priorities and different spatial emphases. The three models that have received attention are; the promotion of civic identity, cultural industries, and city boosterism:

### **2.7.1 Festivals as a mechanism for promoting civic identity**

In this model, festivals, alongside other measures, are used as key elements of a strategy aimed at revitalising public social life, reviving a sense of civic identity and shared belonging to the city, creating a more inclusive and democratic public realm, and raising

expectations about what city life has to offer (Montgomery, 1990; Fisher and Worpole, 1991).

### **2.7.2 Festivals as a mechanism for developing cultural industries**

The emphasis in this model is on the holding of festivals in order to stimulate development and growth of local cultural industries as an important form of wealth creation in its own right, and one which has significant potential for future growth (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986; Money, 1989; Wynne, 1992).

### **2.7.3 Festivals as a means of City boosterism**

Using festivals as an instrument of city promotion is an idea that first emerged in the USA (Whitt, 1987), but has subsequently been adopted by many European cities (Birmingham and Glasgow being prominent examples: Lister, 1991; Booth and Boyle, 1993). It has been termed a consumerist model by Bianchini to indicate its primary emphasis on consumption of festivals as a means of attracting tourists (cultural tourism), enticing business investment, by projecting a better quality of life for professional and executive employees and securing the profitability of physical renewal projects by keeping people in town after work (in effect producing synergies between office uses, shops, restaurants and cultural facilities in mixed use developments and cultural districts (Snedcof, 1985). This model has usually been the product of business led politics of local growth coalitions (Harvey, 1989; Sedgemore, 1989; Kearns and Philo, 1993).

Although it is certainly useful to be able to distinguish analytically the different ways in which festivals have been incorporated into broader strategies of urban regeneration, it does not mean that these models have, in practice, been mutually exclusive. Places have typically employed a combination of approaches, displaying in the process greater or lesser degrees of creativity and imagination. Among the factors that have been important in determining the particular pattern of initiatives being pursued are:

- The place's current and desired position in the regional and international hierarchy
- The place's recent and long-term experiences of economic and industrial restructuring.
- The underlying political culture of the place

- The political demand and priorities thrown up by the place's changing social makeup
- The opportunities made possible by local administration and governmental structures.

In analytical terms, therefore, it can be argued that, while the delineation and categorisation of the use of festivals as a part of a cultural policy helps to bring into focus the variety of approaches that have been adopted, it suffers by virtue of being essentially static and descriptive and therefore their transferability between specific locations must be called into question. It has also been argued that the juxtaposition between ephemeral programmes of events and activities, like festivals and other cultural animation initiatives and permanent facilities such as concert halls, libraries, art museums for example, is, in many ways, artificial. As ephemeral events, if coherently organised and repeated can become permanent features of a city's cultural landscape, producing long term benefits in terms of image, tourism and support for local cultural production (Bianchini, 1993).

## **2.8 The academic study of festivals**

Despite the obvious ubiquity of festivals, serious academic studies of them have been surprisingly neglected (Waterman, 1998). A conventional approach to the study of festivals in human geography has tended to take the view that the arts festival was little more than a transient cultural event with a measurable impact on the landscape, event and economy and have simply been mapped or modelled (see Rooney *et al*, 1982; Leyshon *et al*, 1995; Nash and Carney, 1996). However, festivals are not simply bought or consumed (in an economic sense) but are also accorded meaning throughout their active incorporation into people's lives. They epitomise the representation of contemporary accumulation through spectacle and consumption in an era of flexibility (Harvey, 1987; Zukin, 1990).

### **2.8.1 The impact of festivals**

The impact that festivals have on their host locations has been summarised by Ritchie (1994, p.3) into economic, tourism and commercial, physical, sociocultural, psychological and political (table 2-4).

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b><i>Economic</i></b>	Increased spending Creation of employment	Price increases during event Real estate speculation
<b><i>Tourism + commercial</i></b>	Increased awareness of region  Increased knowledge of the potential for investment	Acquisition of poor reputation if event fails Negative reactions from existing businesses
<b><i>Physical</i></b>	Construction of new facilities Improvement of infrastructure	Environmental damage Overcrowding
<b><i>Sociocultural</i></b>	Increase in interest and participation in new areas (e.g. the arts)	Commercialisation of event in order to attract tourists
<b><i>Psychological</i></b>	Increased local pride	Host/visitor hostility
<b><i>Political</i></b>	Enhanced recognition of region Propagation of political values	Economic exploitation of local population Distortion of event to reflect political values

Table 2-4 The impacts of festivals (source: Ritchie, 1994)

Previous discussions on the impact of festivals have tended to be largely unidimensional in that the economic benefits have received by far the most attention and even then, the perceived positive economic impacts are those which have received the most attention. Whilst these impacts are extremely relevant and are undoubtedly important a total assessment of the economic impact of a festival needs to take into account both the positive and negative influences it has on a local economy.

Tourism and commercial impacts are also generally recognized as important outcomes resulting from festivals, with the holding of festivals often being based on the assumption that the event leads to an enhancement of the awareness and reputation of the host region both from a tourist and a commercial standpoint. Whilst this assumption is intuitively appealing, there have been few studies which document the extent to which it is valid.

To analyse in more detail the impacts that festivals have on their host location the impacts can be broken down into direct impacts (i.e. those impacts that happen as a direct and intended result of the holding of a festival) and indirect impacts (i.e. those impacts that take place as a spin-off benefit from the holding of the festival).

### **2.8.2 The direct impacts of festivals**

The premise behind the theory that festivals can produce direct economic benefits has been expressed by Hillman (1983, p.98-99) who cites a Baltimore city official, who claims that “we have tried to combine animation, public events, image and economic development into a package’ and that such things end up ‘being real dollars and cents for businesses in the city”. Direct economic impacts of festivals can, however, take many forms. Festivals can be a source of direct employment and a generator of growth in ancillary industries, audiences for festivals increase the demand for retail, catering and transportation services. For instance, in United Kingdom in 1991 arts festivals in particular sold an estimated total of 4.2 million tickets, which produced box office takings of approximately £17.6 million (Rolfe, 1992) Other writers such as Walsh (1997 p.8) claim that “the precise economic and social returns of arts events will always be difficult to quantify, but few doubt the huge boost to the local economy from staging events such as the Edinburgh and Cheltenham festivals”.

It is the direct economic impacts of festivals that has received the vast majority of research that has been conducted (see Frey, 1986; Long and Perdue, 1990; Foley, 1991; Hughes and Gratton, 1992; Quinn, 1996) and therefore there is much less scope for introducing new knowledge within this field. However, the emphasis that has been placed on the direct economic impact of festivals by geographers may have been misplaced, as research has claimed that “the direct impact of 1980’s cultural policies on the generation of employment and wealth was relatively modest in comparison with the role of culture in conducting positive urban images ... attracting inward investment and strengthening the competitive position of cities” (Bianchini, 1993, p.2).

### **2.8.3 The indirect economic impacts of arts festivals**

There is an emerging literature on the impacts of festivals which are not confined to analysing visitor spend in a location and aim to identify the indirect impacts that festivals can have on a location. In this context festivals are employed as image builders with the intent of creating positive images that are conducive to the attraction and retention of businesses, residents and tourists.

The role of the festivals in urban regeneration is increasingly considered by local elites as crucial in improving a city’s chances to enhance its image, in attracting tourists and

boosting a new service based economy (Bianchini, 1991). Speaking at the Arts Edge Conference held in 1981, a spokesperson for Partners for Liveable Places observed that “virtually every participant [in the conference] agreed on the contribution that festivals can make to improving a city’s image, tourist market, downturn vitality, and ability to attract the new investment dollars of service and high-technology industries” (Jacobson, 1983, p.8).

Festivals are not only important manifestations of local or regional identity they can also help to revitalise a local economy (Rhydderch, 1996). They have a strong place identification and a festival may help to define a place. In “some places like ... Cheltenham, events have even been built up to the point where their name is synonymous with their festivals, gaining international recognition and visitors in the process” (Walsh 1997, p.8).

In a study of the 1988 winter Olympic Games, held at Calgary in Canada, on recognition of the host city in both the US and Europe it was found that the games had a dramatic impact, not only on the awareness levels of the host city, but also in the connotations associated with it. In contrast, the images and impressions associated with the city of Edmonton, which was used as a control element, remained stable over the same period (Ritchie and Smith, 1991). A caveat was attached to this research, however, in that the impact of the Games on Calgary’s recognition level could be short lived. It was also argued that the value of any increased awareness to the enhancement of the overall socio-economic well being of the host city will be related to how well recognised the city in question already is. For instance, for well known cities such as Los Angeles (hosts of the 1984 summer Olympics) there may be little increase in awareness or change in image due to the high degree of exposure it receives on a regular basis.

The role of festivals as image builders is not confined to creating ‘new’ images for a location, they can also play a profound role in negating previously held images of place. According to Myerscough (1989), festivals based around the arts as part of Glasgow’s year of culture played an important part in the re-imaging of Glasgow by:

- Counteracting any negative image of the city, particularly that portrayed by the media



- Creating a 'new' image for the city that would convince outsiders to the benefits of living and working in Glasgow
- For firms contemplating locating new plant or offices in Glasgow, it was believed that the cultural factor had positive value.

It was also believed that those responsible for selling Glasgow as a business location believed that without a strong cultural infrastructure their task would be more difficult. For example, the arts reputation of the city had been important in attracting a number of initial enquiries about the region as a possible business location. This was especially true of US companies, from whom the bulk of the enquiries came.

The use of festivals, as part of a cultural policy, is effective in attracting new businesses as it has been argued that the views of businesspeople are changing. The new approach places more emphasis on maximising amenities for employers as well as for employees and that it is increasingly becoming clear that in seeking to establish branches, subsidiaries or additional plant, companies were aware of the advantages of a good business address, and a location well resourced with cultural amenities was taken as an indication of a dynamic, self-confident host community.

Recent analyses of relevant location factors (e.g. Smeenk, 1992) reveal a growing importance of the perceived quality of the working environment (Bovaird, 1995) in the choice process. Other factors affecting location and investment decisions relate to the availability of highly skilled personnel, high tech knowledge, and an attractive social climate. The city's cultural supply, even in the narrow sense, has a direct impact on these aspects (e.g. historic environment, prestigious working location), but may also indirectly affect them through, its influence on the local working population characteristics (quality of personnel, purchasing power).

Although culturally orientated aspects do not represent the prime motives in the choice of living accommodation (Brabander and Gijbsbrechts, 1994), recent research (Blommaert, 1992) points to an increased importance of culture in location decision making. It is also interesting to note that the use of culture as an attractant to a location is not equally important to all sub-segments of the population. People belonging to the upper socio-economic groups in society seem to value cultural supply more than other segments of the population (Voye, 1985; De Lannoy, 1987; Ebels and Ostendorf, 1991).

In order to place the use of arts festivals as a method of attracting businesses and highly qualified personnel it is necessary to place it into the context of the changes in businesses and business practices. Modern methods of business communication have obviated the needs of location in specific areas. The growth of information technology and the decentralised office have reduced the need for larger headquarters based in traditional locations and so people and companies can choose to be where life is more congenial, away from congested centres.

The use of festivals as a method of attracting new businesses should not be over-estimated however. Whilst quality of life factors, such as a location's cultural provision, have undoubtedly become more important as the locational restrictions placed upon businesses have become relaxed due to advances in technology it goes without saying that the potential to attract companies remains largely conditional on other factors, such as the availability of reasonably priced location sites, transport infrastructure and local markets. However, there is also some evidence to suggest that although the availability of artistic and cultural activities can, in certain cases, be a contributing, although rarely decisive factor, in plant and location decisions (Cwi, 1992; Johnson and Rasker, 1993; 1995), the increased attractiveness of an area by the use of holding festivals may only be an influence to those firms employing highly trained and mobile personnel (Cwi and Lyall, 1972; Whitt, 1987). There is also a suggestion that perhaps the more crucial role played by the festivals in economic development lies in the category of business retention as, "while culture is a positive influence on employment, it is better at holding people than pulling people to an area ... while culture helps people to stay, it does not persuade them to want to move" (Rodgers, 1989, p.65).

#### **2.8.4 The dissemination of arts festivals (Arts festivals and the media)**

Whilst it is generally considered that the holding of festivals in a location will lead to the creation of positive images of place, the mechanism by which these images are transmitted is rarely mentioned. Moreover, it seems, at times, that the literature is implying that the mere presence of a festival within a location will be sufficient to generate direct and indirect economic impacts.

Perhaps the most common way that images of the festivals in a location are transmitted to external audiences (i.e. those who do not attend the festivities themselves) is via the

media. If a festival is of a sufficiently high profile to attract national and international media attention this attention focused on the host location, even if it is only for a relatively short period of time, can have enormous publicity value and some locations will use this fact alone to justify expenditure on festivals (Garnsey, 1984; Sutton, 1984; Hall, 1989; Getz, 1991). For instance, the regular coverage of cultural activities in Montpellier by the daily newspapers and nationally distributed magazines forms part of a strategy aimed at gaining recognition (Negrier, 1993). Similarly, Walsh (1997, p.9) cites an interview with Mark Fielding (Director of festivals in Bradford) who argues that, "festivals can do a lot for the general profile of a city by attracting media coverage".

In a media conscious age, it is not only the performers and their audiences that can participate in a festival, but also the millions of persons who will never buy a ticket, never personally visit the site who broaden the base of interest in the event (Wall and Mitchell, 1989). The focus of the media on the location of a festival can convey images of that place to a vast audience and has the potential to produce some of the positive images of place required to produce indirect economic impacts. However, the extent of coverage and the nature of media coverage of a festival can do more than convey positive images of place, it can also have an impact on the future funding of festivals in a location as it can have impacts in relation to the popularity of the festival among the general public and the attitude of funding bodies, including business sponsors.

In one of the few studies dealing with the media coverage of festivals, Rolfe (1992) notes that the local press frequently printed previews but rarely reviewed actual festival performances and that the organisers of festivals complain of the difficulty in achieving serious coverage of festival events and a tendency of the local press, in particular, to seek out trivia and scandal. For instance, the organisers of the Sidmouth Festival of International Folk Arts were dismayed when a story about an argument between a Norwegian coach driver and a traffic warden reached the front page of a local paper, while the arguably more impressive performance of the Norwegian choir went unreported. With regard to national coverage, festival organisers frequently stated that, while the national press produced lists of previews, and therefore served a useful role in advertising festival events, it rarely reviewed festival performances. Frustration was expressed at the apparent reluctance of the press to leave London to attend any festival other than the larger, more prestigious ones, which receive international as well as

national coverage. Some festival organisers also complained that the artistic content of their festival went unreported in favour of other aspects, while others found it regrettable that the coverage of arts events was restricted to the arts and entertainment pages.

It would be a mistake to believe that all media coverage of arts festival has a positive impact. For instance the organisers of the Notting Hill carnival have experienced considerable difficulty in attracting business sponsorship for their event, as a direct consequence of what they see as inaccurate and adverse media coverage (Rolfe, 1992). There are also dangers of damage being done to a host location's image to having it connected with a festival that is perceived to have failed (e.g. the Millennium Experience at the Millennium Dome, in Greenwich), or one that is beset by problems (e.g. traffic problems at the Olympics in Atlanta, 1996) or one associated with social problems (e.g. crime at the Glastonbury festival).

#### **2.8.5 A critique of the use of festivals as a method of economic regeneration**

The use of festivals as a means of generating economic returns is not without its problems however. This is partly due to their incorporation within a broader cultural policy as within these policies there is often a clear separation, which can generate tensions and conflicts, between consumption and production orientated strategies (Bianchini, 1993). Consumption strategies are based around developing and promoting urban cultural attractions and activities as magnets for tourism, retailing, hotel and catering whilst production strategies are aimed at providing strategic support for publishing, film, TV, electronic music, design, fashion and other cultural industries, which require specialist skills and infrastructure.

It can be risky in the long term for cities to rely on consumption orientated models of cultural policy led economic development, even if they may be profitable in the short term, by creating visibility and political returns. The success of strategies that use cultural policy to boost retailing and consumer services industries, expand tourism and attract external investment increasingly depends upon factors over which cities have very limited control, ranging from airfare prices to changes in the level of resident's disposable income (Bianchini, 1993).

The incorporation of cultural policies within broader place marketing strategies can also have an impact on the type of culture that is subsequently produced. For instance, it is alleged that place marketing encourages a 'safe' definition of culture that is aimed at attracting commercial sponsors and large audiences. It is argued, therefore that place marketing does not necessarily contribute to cultural regeneration but it is more inclined to benefit the local middle class and cultural tourists. The type of 'culture' that is being created has also been questioned by Bianchini (1992) who believes that cities tend to prioritise support for 'mainstream' arts organisations and the construction of arts venues, rather than for the promotion of new experiments in cultural production or for the development of new talent (Boyle and Hughes, 1991). This could be reflected in conflicts between cultural provision in the city centre and peripheral areas, between consumption orientated strategies and support for local cultural production, and between investment in buildings and support for local cultural production. An example for this can be seen in the regeneration work that took place in Birmingham in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Lister, 1991, p.57) as,

the city's policy shifted ... from providing growth locally to top-shelf stuff they can advertise in the international arena. There are only about four or fringe theatre companies left in Birmingham. Five years ago there were twenty five. ... There are more touring companies coming in now than local companies performing.

It is also valuable to consider briefly the ideological implications of arts-led urban regeneration. The involvement of the arts in urban development projects has been seen as part of a trend which Harvey characterises as the substitution of ethics with aesthetics in British Urban Policy (Harvey, 1989). In this aspect cultural policy is viewed as a means of controlling growing social tensions by artificially re-creating local images of community (Harvey, 1987). However, Booth and Boyle (1993) have claimed that there is no evidence to support Harvey's thesis as they claim that the spectacle of Glasgow's 1990 year of culture was not used as a reward for the middle class. Instead, the range of events was not divided by class and the scale of the community programme suggests that resources were allocated throughout the city. Their conclusions also suggest that the year of culture was not used as a means of social control and pacification but was instead a mechanism for urban unification.

Fears have also been expressed over the long-term use of festivals and culture in general as a means of urban regeneration (Whitt, 1987). This critique is founded on the premise that as cultural policy becomes commonplace as a method of inter-urban competition aimed at attracting mobile investment capital, local advantages would tend to be cancelled out, “the strategy representing, like the international arms race, merely another round of self defeating cut-throat competition” (Molotch and Logan, 1985, p.160). There is also the irony that as more and more locations have made use of cultural initiatives to set themselves apart from other cities in the competition to attract inward investment, they have tended, in practice, to draw on a restricted palette of recipes (concert halls, international festivals, post-modern architectural projects) and this has had the paradoxical effect of tending to make everywhere seem like everywhere else (Boyer, 1992; Griffiths, 1995).

#### **2.8.6 Summary: Festivals, the media and economic development**

The use of cultural policy as an element of urban regeneration is increasingly an uncontested issue (Bianchini, 1993), with many locations using the opportunities afforded to them by the post-industrial landscape as an opportunity to re-invent themselves as a place for consumption of popular culture (Lovatt, 1996). At present, the cultural facets of a festival cannot be divorced from the commercial interests of tourism, regional and local economy and place promotion. Selling the place to the wider world or selling the festival as an inseparable part of the place rapidly becomes a significant facet of most festivals. If the selling is successful, then the festival becomes an important image maker in its own right. However, to fully understand the relationships between festivals, the local economy and place promotion it is necessary to include the mechanisms by which information concerning festivals is disseminated to establish exactly to what extent the media coverage of festivals has any influence over the indirect and direct economic impacts previously identified, therefore challenging some of the accepted and ‘uncontested’ theories surrounding the use of cultural policy as a tool for urban regeneration.

However, a great deal of the information relating to the festivals as creating positive images of place through their transmission in the media is mere conjecture and speculation. As Roche (1994, p.123) concludes, festivals “project a new (or renewed) positive image through the national and international media. This is usually assumed to

have long term positive consequences in terms of tourism, industrial relocation and inward investments”.

## **2.9 A synthesis of the three areas of literature – A framework for this thesis**

Whilst on the surface the three areas of literature may seem to have little in common there is a common thread running through them, in the form of unsubstantiated claims, which can be examined and used to create a synthesis that can act as a framework for this thesis. These claims are, specifically, that:

- Place promotion has positive impacts for localities pursuing this policy
- Media images of place are an important mechanism by which people construct images of place
- The positive images of place created by the holding of festivals can have indirect impacts on their host location.

To summarise, during the 1980s and 1990s there have been energetic image enhancement and promotional campaigns by a number of different localities throughout the world, (Burgess, 1981; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Holcomb 1993; 1994) with the enhancement and promotion of place image now being seen as a vital part of economic development strategies (Wilkinson, 1992; Jessop, 1998). One way in which places can be promoted is through the attraction of high profile festivals and events (Hall, 1992; Smyth, 1994) as the coverage of these events disseminates images of place throughout the local, national and international media, potentially reaching a far greater number and range of audiences than conventional place marketing campaigns would do. This coverage reaches a number of discrete audiences and has tangible and intangible impacts. These include potential investors whose decisions may be influenced by the images of the location that they receive through the media and the local business community who might be convinced that the economic strategies of the local authority and other bodies responsible for place marketing and development have been successful. The coverage of these events, then, is crucial in selling places to both internal and external audiences.

Whilst much attention has been paid to the place promotion campaigns of local authorities (Fretter, 1993; Hall and Hubbard, 1996), the content of media reports on place and the direct economic impacts of festivals, as yet, whilst much has been suggested and implied, there is little, if any, empirical evidence that examines the extent to which the media coverage of festivals can have an impact on economic development at the local level. The aim of this thesis, then, is to examine the way in which the media coverage of festivals within a specified locality can have impacts on the creation of an image for an area as well as identifying the impacts that this image can have.

### **2.9.1 Research Questions**

Overall, therefore, this thesis addresses four crucial research questions

1. What are the images of place that are produced within the newspaper reports of:
  - a) news stories concerning the place
  - b) coverage of the place's festivals.
2. How do the images of place contained within the newspaper coverage of festivals compare to the newspaper coverage of the location generally?
3. To what extent is the media coverage of place and more specifically the media coverage of the place's festivals important in the construction of images of place by the business community?
4. What are the tangible impacts of media coverage of festivals on local economic development?

To achieve these aims, this research involves

- A content analysis of the media coverage of a location to examine the way in which the media coverage creates and/or maintains an 'image' for a location
- Semi-structured interviews with the business community to identify the extent to which the media coverage of place and, more specifically, the media coverage of a place's festivals can lead to tangible impacts on economic development

The following chapter discusses the methodology developed to achieve these objectives.



## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The purpose of this section is to take the key issues that were identified from the literature review and translate these broad themes into a practical and achievable methodological structure to collect and analyse the data required. The section is divided into three distinct sections; the first identifies the issues arising from the literature review and discusses some of the practical implications of collecting and analysing data. The second section is concerned with the theoretical nature of enquiry and tackles issues such as the requirement for a mixed, but primarily qualitative, methodology for this thesis and selecting the most appropriate methodology from those available. The third section discusses the main procedures that were used in the collection and analysis of the data collected and addresses issues concerning reliability and validity in qualitative research and an evaluation of the techniques used in this thesis.

### **3.1 Issues arising from the literature review**

Whilst place marketing has been proposed and adopted by agencies responsible for economic development in many places as a method localities can adapt to the changing structure of industry in North America and Western Europe, little is known as to whether these policies do indeed produce the impacts with which they are associated. The main way in which place marketing policies operate is in the construction of new or renewed positive images of place. One mechanism by which this can be achieved is through the holding of festivals or events that attract media coverage. This coverage is important as it can disseminate images of place to a much greater and wider audience than the audience for traditional place marketing campaigns. Whilst it has been suggested that this coverage can lead to positive economic impacts on a host location this assumption is yet to be thoroughly tested. The purpose, then, of this thesis is to identify the way in which images of place are transmitted via the media coverage of festivals, how these images are responsible for the subsequent construction of images of place and the extent to which these images can lead to intangible economic impacts.

These impacts are intangible as they cannot be directly measured or assessed. They are, nonetheless, an incredibly important part of the way in which places compete for new businesses and highly qualified and skilled personnel. Whilst there are studies which consider the tangible economic impacts of various events and festivals (Frey, 1986; Hughes, 1989; Heilbrun, 1993; Hardy *et al*, 1996; Wall, 1998), little is known about

how effective festivals can be as image makers and to what extent their incorporation within a place's image can have on economic development.

### **3.2 Practical considerations**

There are, however, four practical considerations that need to be taken into account in relation to these two distinct areas before more concise research questions can be produced. In essence, these relate to how the media images of place that are contained within festival reports can be conceptualised within an 'image cycle' framework that, whilst acknowledging the importance of production issues such as the political affiliations and sponsorship of the media, places an emphasis on the 'end user' or consumer of media images. Central to this proposition is the way in which these images are incorporated within their existing images and the extent to which they are important for the economic development of place. The second practical consideration concerns the difficulties of defining and studying the media. Thirdly, an argument is proposed for the need to adopt an individual case study approach in which the images produced and consumed for one individual location can be studied. Finally, the topic of the analysis of the pictorial representations that were contained in the media reports is discussed.

#### **3.2.1 Practical considerations: 'The image cycle'**

It is often implicit within the research on place marketing that in order to understand fully the way in which audiences respond and react to the images they receive it is necessary to follow the process of place marketing from the production of the image to the way in which the images are subsequently consumed and used as the basis for actions. Whilst this thesis does not reject the saliency of such an approach, the research, to date, has been heavily weighted towards the way in which place marketing campaigns are designed and implemented and, as a result, we know little, if anything, about the way in which the consumers of images react to the marketing material and the extent to which these reactions form the basis of subsequent actions. For instance, a few industrial geographers have attempted to quantify the environmental perceptions of entrepreneurs (Taylor and McDermott, 1977; Barr *et al*, 1980), but the methodologies used are rather crude and simplistic. Ranking places in terms of their suitability for branch plant location (Taylor, 1977) gives no indication of the factors that led to the expressed preferences, whilst attitude scaling (Barr and Fairbairn, 1978) may not provide a true reflection of beliefs and opinions. It is, therefore, the intention of this thesis to place an emphasis on the neglected areas of the way in which marketed images are

consumed by external audiences and are used as the basis for actions. However, this is not to suggest that the marketed images are to be removed from the context of their production, but instead they are to be used as a starting point to understand the way in which they are subsequently consumed. This process, with specific relation to this thesis, can be expressed diagrammatically as follows:

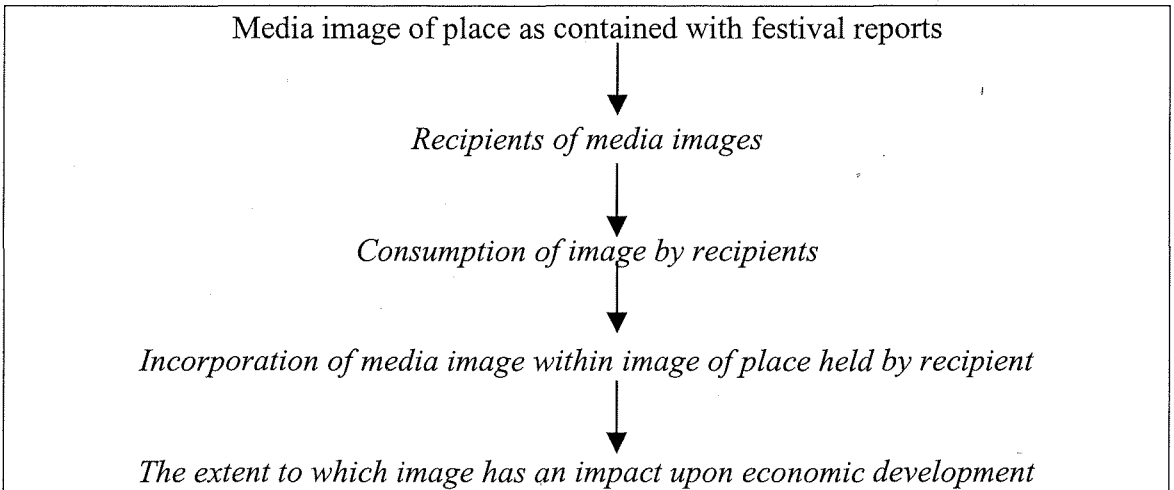


Figure 3-1 The image cycle used for the purposes of this study

The importance placed on the consumers of place marketing and the inter-relationships between the images that they receive and images they construct as a result is of primary significance as very few published studies have used consumers to elicit the individual components that are important parts of the images that they construct. Fewer still have combined the free elicitation of the components of the constructed image with a more structured approach to code them (Selby and Morgan, 1996). This thesis aims to fill this substantial gap by examining the media images that are projected, the way in which these images are consumed and what, if any, impact the consumption of these images has on economic development.

### 3.2.2 Practical considerations – Researching the media

Many of the definitions of what is comprised by the ‘media’ are overly vague and thus incredibly difficult to conceptualise and transform into manageable data collection and analysis methods. An example of this is the definition proposed by Zonn (1990, p.2) who views the media as, “any mechanism that has the capacity to convey information”. Such a definition poses many difficulties for someone researching the media as the collection, storage and subsequent analysis of data becomes a hugely onerous task, especially as many different methodological approaches would need to be adopted

depending on the nature of the media studied. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, a surrogate will be used in order to facilitate the collection of data for the way in which images of place are transmitted in the media through their coverage of a location's festivals. The use of a surrogate in studies of this type is not without precedent, however. For instance, as Young and Lever, (1997, p.334) note;

all evaluative methods, beyond the measurement of direct outputs are inherently subjective... it is not possible to directly observe, measure or evaluate the actual consumption of place imagery. The process is a complex one, involving a series of interpretive acts and decisions which unfold over time and which are influenced by a wide variety of factors. The methodological implications of this are that any study of the consumption of place imagery actually involves the study of surrogates which give an insight into that process.

In this case, the media is the surrogate being used, but as there are so many different ways in which something that could be defined as the media has the potential to transmit images of place a selection was made in order to make it possible to collect and analyse the images of place that were transmitted through the coverage of a location's festivals. With specific reference to Cheltenham, there is a broad range of media that either advertently or inadvertently promote Cheltenham which range from the local and national media to individual web sites and documentation that is produced with specific relation to promoting the town to a tourist audience. This range of media sources presents a substantial problem to a researcher wishing to focus on the media as a source of data. These problems include being aware of the existence of each of these sources, for instance an individual web site will only appear on an internet search engine if it has been registered with that search engine and therefore not all web sites are registered with each search engine. Similarly, available listings for television and radio media are relatively incomplete in that they do not include every aspect of every program, especially for news coverage that cannot be listed in advance due to the 'up to the minute' nature of news coverage. The problem of tele-visual and radio media is further compounded by the increase in channels available through digital communications. It is, therefore, difficult, if not impossible, for a research project to draw on all aspects of the media.

Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, newspaper reports have been used as a surrogate for the media generally. Newspapers have also been used within previous

studies in place marketing as, “the newspaper is one historic vehicle for this marketing, as documented by studies of 19<sup>th</sup> century boosterism” (Myers-Jones and Brooker-Gross, 1994, p.196) (see also Belcher, 1947; Abbot, 1981). Newspapers were also chosen as they are relatively inexpensive, easy to obtain both in written form and via the Internet, provide a permanent record which would allow replication studies and are relatively easy to transcribe.

Six national newspapers were chosen as the surrogate for the media:

- *The Financial Times*
- *The Daily Telegraph (The Sunday Telegraph)*
- *The Times (The Times on Sunday)*
- *The Independent (The Independent on Sunday)*
- *The Guardian (The Observer on Sunday)*
- *The Daily Mail (The Mail on Sunday)*.

National newspapers were chosen in preference to local newspapers as it was believed that the local press would give less ‘background’ information about the location in which festival was taking place in as it could be argued that this is something that the local readership would be already familiar with. National newspapers were also selected as much of the literature indicates that the images of place contained within the media are a primary factor in business relocations and the attraction of highly skilled employees to a new area (Myerscough, 1989; Rodgers, 1989). Therefore, the images that are contained within the local press would not, generally, be disseminated to an audience that was outside of the locale.

An intentional emphasis was also placed on the quality broadsheet (Sparks, 1987) press to the exclusion of the ‘tabloid’ press. This was done for two principal reasons; firstly, if the suggestion that positive images of place are an attractant to business executives and highly skilled employees is correct, then they are more likely to have been exposed to the images contained within the ‘quality’ press. Secondly, each of the broadsheet newspapers chosen for this study have searchable online databases which can be used to locate older articles. As part of this process an attempt was made to access readership statistics for each of the selected newspapers in order to assess the demographic profile

of its readership. However, despite requests to the newspapers themselves and searches amongst the relevant literature, statistics beyond the number of newspapers sold proved to be elusive.

### **3.2.3 Practical considerations: Adopting a case study approach**

In order to examine the way in which images of place are transmitted in the media through the coverage of festivals it was necessary to select a single case study. The importance of selection of a case study area has been highlighted by Ashworth and Voogd (1990, p.124) who have noted that, "the ideal situation [in place marketing research] would be to collect information upon the image promoted and received of the same place". A number of criteria were used to select the case study as the case study area needed to be one that had an abundance of festivals that attract national media attention and also has a need to market itself with a view to attracting new business or well qualified employees. It was also important to select a case study that was not one of the United Kingdom's major cities as far too great an emphasis has been placed on place marketing in large conurbations to the neglect of the ways in which smaller locations use place marketing as a tool for economic regeneration (Lever, 2001; Millington, 2002).

Cheltenham was therefore selected for the basis of this study as there have been recent changes in the composition of the business community, with companies such as Gulf Oil and Whitbread either moving away from the area or closing a substantial part of their operation in the town. This trend continued following a merger between Eagle Star and the Zurich Insurance Company which led to over 1,000 job losses in Cheltenham (Gloucestershire Echo, 1999). There is, therefore, a need to both attract new businesses to the area as well as ensuring that, as far as possible, those businesses that are already located here are not tempted away. Cheltenham faces problems, however, in attracting new businesses as it cannot compete with locations that have 'assisted area' status as it is unable to offer financial incentives. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that it must rely to a significant degree on its current physical and cultural attributes to entice new businesses into the area. To this end there are a number of high quality festivals and events that take place within Cheltenham each year.

However, whilst there are a large number of festivals that take place in Cheltenham that are of international standing, a sample of four festivals were used as the basis of this study. The four selected festivals were:

- National Hunt Festival
- International Festival of Music
- Cheltenham Festival of Literature
- Network Q Rally of Great Britain.

These festivals were chosen as they offer a balance between cultural festivals and sporting events and thus may not preclude certain individuals who have no interest in one of these categories from having been exposed to the media coverage that they receive. They were also chosen as they represented festivals that draw competitors/participants from both a national and international scale and therefore, it could be argued, represent festivals that have a profile which would attract media attention from the national press. This was verified by an unsystematic analysis of online newspaper archives for previous years.

The Network Q Rally of Great Britain was specifically chosen because it is a festival that is not indigenous to Cheltenham and therefore allows an insight into the extent that the 'purchasing' of transitory festivals can also lead to the creation of positive images of place. This is seen to be significant as with places that are competing for jobs, investment etc. also competing to hold high profile festivals and events, ranging from the Olympic Games and football World Cups to the European City of Culture and flower festivals, an analysis of the extent to which festivals that are transitory and don't have an association with a particular location can highlight the extent to which they are successful in transmitting images of place via the media of their temporary host location when compared to events that are established in a particular place.

Cheltenham was also chosen as a case study as it is significantly different from other locations that have used festivals as a method of place promotion (for example, Stratford Upon Avon and Edinburgh) in that it has little else in the way of attractions. For instance, Cheltenham doesn't have a series of historic buildings (e.g. a castle or cathedral) and it doesn't have an association with a major historical figure (e.g. William Shakespeare). Cheltenham, therefore, is more reliant on its festivals as a mechanism for

generating publicity for the town than other comparable locations that have also invested heavily in the use of festivals as a method of creating or maintaining a positive image of place.

### **3.2.4 Practical considerations: The analysis of pictorial images of place**

The initial intention of this thesis was to analyse not only the text content of the reports on Cheltenham and its festivals and events but also to include the pictorial representations that accompanied these reports. However, whilst there were more than fifty photographs that accompanied the reports, these images were exclusively related to the person or persons to which the article related. In many of these cases the photographs were not taken in Cheltenham and probably originated from publicity photos held on file by newspaper offices. On the few occasions where the photos were taken in Cheltenham, the person being photographed was central to the photo and the background was blurred and out of focus thus rendering any analysis of the typology of images used to portray Cheltenham highly difficult if not impossible. This is not to say, however, that the absence of pictorial images of Cheltenham was ignored and this issue is returned to in subsequent chapters.

### **3.3 The need for a qualitative methodology**

In social science research there is often no single best way to collect data, with the method that is chosen depending upon the nature of the research question posed and the specific questions you want to ask respondents (Wilson, 1996). Moreover, the outcome of research is substantially affected by the research design method used as “the reliability and usefulness of research findings and their interpretation are closely linked with the nature and quality of the survey methods used and often reflect the underlying research design adopted” (Healey and Rawlinson, 1993, p.221). However, it is possible to conceptualise research design along an extensive-intensive axis, with each of the two types of design asking different sorts of question, using different techniques and methods and defining their objects and boundaries differently. Extensive research is primarily concerned with establishing some sort of general patterns and common properties in a population. It typically uses standardised questionnaires and interview surveys of representative samples of the entire population, and descriptive and inferential statistics in the analysis. Extensive research is the dominant research design used in positivist approaches in the social sciences. Intensive research, by contrast, is



typically undertaken using less standardised and more interactive interviews and mainly qualitative forms of analysis.

A qualitative approach is of primary importance to this thesis as it allows a concern for the difference and diversity in both the way in which the images of place are produced via the media and how individuals react to them. One of the major assumptions of qualitative research is that an individual's knowledge can be seen as being socially constructed, i.e. it is formed by people's interactions with each other and sources of information or opinion in which they come into contact. The way in which this construction of a 'reality' or knowledge cannot, therefore, simply be modelled or quantified. One of the major critiques of the current research into place marketing is that too much attention has been paid to quantitative analysis of marketing materials to the neglect of the way that individuals engage and react with marketed images in order to construct their own realities (Bailey, 1990; Millington, 2002).

It is implied within qualitative research that the world is disordered and cannot be quantified, and, as a direct consequence of this, human behaviour is not rational with individuals basing their decisions upon their knowledge and perception of reality. Therefore, in seeking to examine the images of place that individuals construct we should not look to simple, quantifiable solutions, but should instead examine the complexities of individual knowledge construction which can only be achieved via qualitative methods. Qualitative analysis is therefore necessary to gather attitudinal data regarding the consumption of image. The data generated gives some insight into how place image is consumed, how this process is involved in decision making and allowing an evaluation of how effective the place promotion is in influencing decision maker's perception of place (Young and Lever, 1997).

This is not to say, however, that there is no place within research generally, or within this thesis specifically, for quantitative research methods. For instance, quantitative methods are employed to give contextual information relating to the newspaper coverage of festivals by giving an indication of the amount and frequency of published reports. The use of a mixed methodology is also recommended by Selby and Morgan (1996, p.289) as, "clearly it emerges that the richest and most useful data in place image studies are produced by a combination of techniques or a form of methodological

pluralism". This quantitative data, however, is purely indicative and complementary to the qualitative analysis which forms the substantive part of this thesis.

### **3.4 The analysis of newspaper reports**

Content analysis was chosen as the most appropriate method for the purpose of analysing the newspaper images of Cheltenham, both in relation to news reports and coverage of the town's festivals, as it has the flexibility to be used both quantitatively in order to produce an analysis of the amount and frequency of newspaper coverage but also can be used qualitatively to examine the key constructs that are employed to convey images of Cheltenham.

#### **3.4.1 Quantitative content analysis**

Quantitative content analysis involves establishing categories which can either be individual words, phrases or concepts and then counting the number of instances that those categories are used in a particular item of text (Silverman, 1995). Therefore, quantitative content analysis may be defined as a methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken or published communications by systematic, objective and quantitative analysis (Zito, 1974). However, the methods and techniques of analysis employed by quantitative researchers to analyse data collected through content analysis are many and varied (Pannas, 1996).

- *Descriptive analysis*: Here analysis means counting the frequency in appearance of certain elements of the research question and comparing it with other elements.
- *Categorical analysis*: Here analysis involves a study of the documents by means of a set of categories, producing nominal as well as ordinal and interval data, which are then processed statistically.
- *Contingency analysis*: This analysis is basically a semantic communication analysis that is usually employed to make an inference from the text about the personality of the author (Merten, 1983)
- *Contextual analysis*: Here the sequence in which certain concepts appear together in set texts is examined. The systematic appearance of certain concepts together is not considered to be accidental but is taken to express the thinking

patterns of the author or to correspond with communicative intentions of the speaker.

A quantitative analysis would be of some use as a measure of how often, over a defined time period, a particular phrase or word is used within the text. However, there are a number of problems with only using this method of textual analysis. First, this method considers product and says little of process. In the context of this discussion it deals only with what has been produced and not the decisions which informed its production which could tell us much about its received and intended meanings. Second, an empiricist problem is raised for it only deals with information which can be measured and standardised and for this reason considers only data that can be simplified into categories. Third, in this preoccupation with counting, it reproduces the meanings used by authors in the first instance, as opposed to subjecting them to critical analysis in terms of the political, social and economic context of their production. Fourth, from an ethnomethodological perspective, it fails to understand the practical organisational context of their production and interpretation as part of the methods by which people make sense of their social world (Benson and Hughes, 1991). Fifth, it assumes that the audience who received the message must translate it as the researcher does. By default, it thereby negates the idea that a text is open to a number of possible readings by its audience. The frequency with which words or phrases appear in a text may therefore say nothing about their significance within a text. It may be that a single striking word or phrase conveys a meaning out of all proportion to its frequency, and a non-quantitative approach may be better to grasp the significance of such isolated references. Therefore in order to fully analyse a document the analyst must engage in an act of qualitative synthesis when attempting to summarise the overall meaning of the text and its impact on the reader (Scott, 1990).

### **3.4.2 Qualitative content analysis**

The type of content analysis employed in qualitative research is fundamentally different from that of quantitative studies (Sarantakos, 1998). This difference can be accounted for in terms of the differences between the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted by qualitative analysts. Qualitative content analysis analyses data by identifying and evaluating the items that appear to be theoretically important and meaningful and relate them to the central question of the study. In some cases the researcher will study the text semantically and syntactically in an attempt to relate the meaning of parts of the

text to the meaning of the document as a whole. In other cases, the processes of collection and analysis of data are seen as an attempt to identify criteria in the text that may refer to actions, effects of expressions and principles that will allow statements about the emotional and cognitive background as well as about the behaviour of the communicators. More particularly, Mayring (1988) proposes that there are 4 different approaches to qualitative analysis of documentary evidence which are summarised below.

- *Summary*: In which the analysis will mean a reduction in data, as well as integration, generalisation and classification of the data into categories.
- *Explication*: In which the analysis will aim at explaining texts or individual parts of the text.
- *Structuration*: Which involves development of structures by putting the material in some sort of order, by means of pre-defined criteria, for example.
- *Objective hermeneutics*: (Oevermann *et al*, 1983) This method is based on the assumption that behind the single forms of action there are latent structures of meaning, which direct individual actions, such individual actions are expressions of these latent structures of meaning, which ultimately become for the interacting people autonomous forms of reality, which influence them. The aim of objective hermeneutics, therefore, is to work out what these latent structure of meanings are from inferences made from textual information.

A qualitative analysis, on the other hand, starts with the idea of process, or social context, and views the author as a self-conscious actor addressing an audience under particular circumstances. "In the process, the analyst picks out what is relevant for analysis and pieces it together to create tendencies, sequences, patterns and orders. The process of deconstruction, interpretation and reconstruction breaks down many of the assumptions of quantitative analysis" (Ericson *et al*, 1991, p.55). A qualitative analysis, therefore, allows the researcher to consider not only the ways in which meaning is constructed, but also the ways in which new meanings are developed and employed (May, 1997).

The principal differences between quantitative and qualitative content analysis have been summarised by Ericson *et al* (1991, p.50) who claim that whilst "quantitative content analysis seeks to show patterns of regularities in content through repetition ...

[while] qualitative content analysis emphasises the fluidity of the text in the interpretative understanding of culture". The qualitative methods used in such cases are sometimes also referred to as discourse or rhetorical analysis. Although a few researchers originally trained in the social sciences still tend to discount rhetorical or discourse-analytic studies, these qualitative means of assessing content can be just as empirical and just as rigorous as, say, ethnographers' qualitative methods of studying people (Priest 1996).

However, whilst qualitative and quantitative analysis may seem inherently different it is possible for both quantitative and qualitative forms of content analysis to be used in the same study as both methods can be considered to be appropriate for different kinds of data and producing different kinds of results/interpretations (Wright, 1986; Priest, 1996; Sarantakos, 1998). As a qualitative technique, content analysis may be directed toward more subjective information such as motives, attitudes or values. As a quantitative method it may be employed when determining the time, frequency or duration of an event (Eckhardt and Ermann, 1977). In the context of a quantitative study, content analysis investigates the thematic content of communication and aims to make inferences about individual or group values, sentiments, intentions or ideologies as expressed in the content of communication and to assess the effects of communication on the audiences reached (Mahr, 1995).

This discussion indicates that in both qualitative and quantitative analysis of texts content analysis studies the content of documents, and this can be either the manifest or latent content. The manifest content refers to the visible, surface text, the actual parts of the text as manifested in the document, that is the words, sentences and paragraphs and so on. Here analysis related to the straight and the obvious, the visible content of the document, and involves counting frequencies of appearance of selected items within the text. The latent content is the underlying meaning conveyed through the document. Here the researcher reads between the lines, and registers the messages, meanings and symbols that are inferred or hidden and which are significant for the object of study. The words and sentences of the document are manifestations of implied meanings and in this sense they are used as indicators of the presence and frequency of occurrence of meanings. It is the flexibility of content analysis that makes it an ideal choice for this study. A basic quantitative analysis can be used to give an indication of the amount and frequency of newspaper images whilst a more in-depth qualitative analysis can be used

to examine and identify the key constructs that are used in the projection of images of place contained within the newspaper reports of festivals.

### **3.5 Investigating the tangible impacts of media images of place**

Interviews with key personnel in Cheltenham's business community were used as a mechanism to gain an insight into the relationship between media images of place generally and in relation to media images of festivals specifically and the subsequent construction of images of place and the extent to which these images lead to tangible impacts on economic development. Interviews, defined as "encounters between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the subject of the research, the respondent's answers constitute the raw data analysed at a later point in time by the researcher" (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1983, p.66), have become increasingly important within social science research (it has been estimated that 90% of all social science investigations use interviews in one way or another (Briggs, 1986) as it is increasingly recognised that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are meaningful properties of a social reality which cannot be examined through highly structured, quantitative research techniques.

Many social scientists have long held doubts about the validity of highly structured methods of social investigation and data collection (Wilson, 1996). The attempt to study the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of respondents using artificial, unnaturalistic procedures is held to entail an unacceptably high degree of reactivity, no matter how well it is done. The use of a highly structured interview technique may structure the interview without necessarily controlling it unless the respondent is made to think about their answers (Schoenberger, 1991). A typical research respondent on business location decisions, for example, might be a busy manager, prone to being interrupted and being pre-occupied by the exigencies of their job. Willingness to be interviewed or to fill out a questionnaire in the first place is a positive sign, but not enough to ensure an accurate response, if only because filling out a questionnaire is often not a particularly interesting task. Although possibly sympathetic to the research project, the respondent is not likely to be intellectually engaged in the theoretical or empirical debates that the survey is meant to illuminate. Ignorance of these debates may itself contribute to misunderstandings about the meanings of various questions (Briggs, 1986). The respondent may also be frustrated by questions or by a range of possible answers (where these are proposed) that do not apply precisely to their own experience. The interviewee

may not know with certainty what the correct answer is, and may not be inclined to engage in personal research to verify the accuracy of a particular response. Although these difficulties may be noted, especially when the questionnaire is administered in person, they are still not very amenable to subsequent analysis, which depends upon consistent categories of response. Further, these difficulties may escape notice altogether if the respondent, through frustration or the lack of intellectual engagement, complete knowledge or time, simply adapts his or her responses to the questionnaire and its categories.

### **3.5.1 The use of semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the best available method for the collection of data from members in the business community in relation to the way in which the consumption of images of place can produce tangible economic benefits for a host location. The reasoning behind this approach draws upon the experiences of other researchers, such as (Healey, 1991; Rose, 1994), and recommendations such as “when there are a large number of questions, or the subject of the survey involves an investigation into the reasons for decisions or people’s perceptions, an in-depth (loosely structured) interview is usually essential”. (Healey,1991, p.124).

In semi-structured interviews questions are normally specified, but the interviewer is more free to probe beyond the answers in a manner which would often seem prejudicial to the aims of standardisation and comparability. Follow up questions can be asked to seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given, enabling the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers given. These types of interview are therefore said to allow people to answer more in their own terms than the standardised interview permits, but still provide a greater structure for comparability than the unstructured interview. Using this approach the interviewer not only has more control over who answers the questions but they can also clarify ambiguous answers.

The great advantage of the in-depth interview over more structured methods is that it allows direct access to participants in events and decisions that shape statistical outcomes. At the same time, interviews necessarily rely on the participants own experiences of these experiences and processes. This creates problems for the researcher, however, as they are necessarily placed in the position of interpreting these

interpretations. In this way the knowledge generated is unavoidably filtered through the processes by which people make sense of their own experiences (Bourdieu, 1977).

A semi-structured interview approach also allows the key issues identified in the literature review to be used as the basis for topics or areas which could be discussed with each respondent but also allows the flexibility to probe vague answers or expand upon areas of interest. It also has the advantage of being able to offer some comparability between respondents as they have also been asked about the same general areas whilst still allowing individual respondents the ability to talk about what how they construct images, what factors are important in the construction of these images and the extent to which the media coverage of festivals is important in this process.

### **3.5.2 Issues in interviewing the business community**

Interviews which are less highly structured are most helpful when exploring new topics, sensitive or emotive issues and when the businesses are highly variable in their characteristics. They are particularly suited for detailed examinations of topics where the nature of the experience of respondents is likely to vary widely, when investigating underlying causal mechanisms and when seeking to understand and explain aspects of business behaviour (Healey, 1991; Healey and Rawlinson, 1993). According to McDowell (1992), semi-structured interviews with the business community are therefore essential when a researcher is interested in

- The rationales underlying complex processes can be revealed
- The real world predicaments and strategies of institutional agents
- Generation of hypotheses about business behaviour

The merit of the corporate interview is that it recognises that firms are institutional agents embedded in a complex network of internal and external relationships (Schoenberger, 1991). As such, there is a tacit acknowledgement that the business world is populated by individuals faced with a myriad of constraints and possibilities that are difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle. The semi-structured interview approach, then, allows the researcher to directly access the people responsible for day to day decision making and endeavours to gain an insight to the processes that lead to decision making process “rather than merely infer causation from statistics” (Fothergill and Guy, 1990, p.44).



### **3.6 The collection and analysis of data**

The following section identifies the procedures that were adopted in this study in order to collect and subsequently analyse the data gathered from the selected newspapers and the interviews with the business community.

#### **3.6.1 The collection of newspaper articles covering the selected festivals**

Newspaper reports from the six selected newspapers (*The Financial Times*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Mail*) were collated for the four selected festivals (The Cheltenham Festival of Music (July, 1999), The Cheltenham Festival of Literature (October, 1999), The Network Q Rally (November, 1999) and the National Hunt Festival (March, 2000) for a period commencing 1 week prior to the event and concluding 1 week after the event. Each of the newspapers was purchased in Cheltenham each day, in order to take into account any regional variation in newspaper coverage. Each article related to Cheltenham was cut from the newspaper, photocopied and then transcribed using optical character recognition (OCR) software. In order to prevent articles being missed, daily checks were made on the World Wide Web sites for each of the respective newspapers by using searches for key words (such as 'Cheltenham', 'festival', 'literature', 'music' etc.). Once the articles were transcribed and checked against the original documents they were saved as text files ready for subsequent qualitative analysis.

#### **3.6.2 The collection of newspaper articles covering news stories within Cheltenham**

Similar methods to those used for the collection of newspaper reports relating to Cheltenham's festivals were used in order to investigate the way in which Cheltenham is covered in the media generally. At monthly intervals between February 1999 and June 2002 searches were made using the online search function of each of the six newspapers selected for this study using the keyword 'Cheltenham'. The first search, in February 1999 was conducted through the entire database of each of the newspapers, but subsequent searches were only done for the period since the last search was conducted. Articles relating to one of Cheltenham's festivals in a year other than the year used for this study (indicated in the section above) were discounted as the purpose of this investigation was to examine the way in which Cheltenham is portrayed in the media with the exception of the coverage that the town's festivals receive. Each article

that was identified by the database search was 'cut and pasted' from the database and transferred to individual text files ready for subsequent qualitative analysis.

It should be noted, however, that the use of online databases held by newspaper publishers is not an entirely accurate method of data collection (Soothill and Grover, 1997). Databases may not be complete, may not reflect slight regional variations within the national press and the results are limited to the choice and appropriateness of the key words that are used to search the database. However, for supplementary articles relating to Cheltenham's image contained within newspaper articles, the ease of use of online databases outweighed the expense and the consumption of time involved in the daily purchase and searching of several national newspapers.

### **3.6.3 Generating interviews with Cheltenham's business community**

Five distinct but overlapping groups were targeted as key informants for this research:

- Businesses who had their national or international headquarters in Cheltenham
- Businesses who recruited skilled employees from a national and international pool of labour
- Business that had relocated to Cheltenham within the last ten years
- Organisations that frequently meet with representatives from smaller businesses
- The two principal organisers of festivals within Cheltenham.

In part, this choice was informed by the limited amount of literature in relation to place promotion and reflects some of the unsubstantiated claims as to the principal audiences for place marketing. It also encompassed the organisations that are primarily responsible for the promotion of Cheltenham's festivals in order to ascertain the extent to which they believe their actions have an impact on local economic development in the town.

### **3.6.4 Sampling structure adopted for generating businesses to contact**

The background population of Cheltenham's business community was constructed by reference to local authority documents which give a breakdown of the type of business that are located in the town and compare this with the national figure (see table 3.1).

Sector	Percentage of employment	
	Cheltenham	National
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0.1%	1.5%
Manufacturing	19.1%	20.8%
Construction	3.9%	5.2%
Distribution, Hotels and Catering	13.4%	15.2%
Transport and Communication	2.0%	8.1%
Financial and Business Services	29.0%	22.2%
Public Administration	20.8%	17.4%
Other	7.6%	9.6%

Table 3-1 Cheltenham's industrial composition (Source: Cheltenham Borough Council, 2000)

Although qualitative research makes no claims about the representivity of its sampling procedures (Schofield, 1996), there was an implicit aim within this study to obtain interviews with companies that broadly represented the profile of the town's businesses. This was achieved by using local business directories and by reference to publications issued by local authorities and other economic development orientated organisations that identified the most prominent business in Cheltenham, both in terms of the prestige of the company and by the numbers of people that it employed.

### 3.6.5 Contacting local businesses and arranging interviews

Initially, attempts were made to arrange interviews by writing to those companies and organisations located in Cheltenham that fitted one of the five categories noted in section 3.6.3 and also reflected the overall structure of Cheltenham's business community as noted above. However, this initial contact did not generate a sufficient number of responses and therefore potential respondents were contacted over the telephone rather than by sending out formal letters by post. Talking to people on the telephone enabled interviews to be arranged much more quickly and produced a much higher number of responses than contacting people than by letter. The letter sent to potential interviewees, and the contact that was made by telephone was designed so that it was possible to let the potential interviewee know instantly what would be required of them during the interview, and also for them to assess whether they would be the best person within their organisation to answer the general area of questions that would be raised. An important part of this initial request for interview, especially as many of the people that were contacted were senior business executives within national and multinational companies, was also to let potential participants know the amount of their time that would be taken up by the interview. The time for the interview that was

requested from interviewees was forty five minutes, and whilst many of the respondents indicated that that this would be the maximum time that they could afford in practice many of the interviews over-ran, even though an offer was always made to terminate the interview at the end of the pre-scheduled time. A breakdown of the organisations interviewed is shown in table 3-2 and shows that the companies from which interviewees were drawn that were used in this thesis are broadly representative of the overall composition of Cheltenham's business community (see table 3-1).

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Approximate level of interviewee</b>	<b>Sector of the economy</b>
Bovis Homes	Director	Construction
Chelsea Building Society	Senior Manager	Financial and Business Services
Messier Dowty	Senior Manager	Manufacturing
University of Gloucestershire	Middle Management	Other
Zurich Group	Senior Manager	Financial and Business Services
Smiths Industries	Director	Manufacturing
Marlborough Stirling	Director	Financial and Business Services
Nelson Thornes Publishing	Director	Other
University and Colleges Admission Service	Executive	Public Administration
Government Communication Headquarters	Senior Manager	Public Administration
Cheltenham Film Studios	Director	Other
Krone UK Technique	Senior Manager	Manufacturing
Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce	Senior Manager	Public Administration
Gloucestershire Development Agency	Senior Manager	Public Administration
Cheltenham Borough Council	Head of Department	Public Administration
Kraft Foods	Senior Manager	Manufacturing
Cheltenham Racecourse	Executive	Other

Table 3-2 List of interviewees

### 3.6.6 Piloting the interview

Before conducting the interviews the questions that were intended to be asked during the interview needed to be piloted in order to test the language, wording and structure of questions. The interview schedule was tested within the research project supervisory team which led to much refinement of the schedule, including the shortening of the length of individual questions in order to make them less complicated to people who were less intimately familiar with the literature on place marketing. Questions deemed

irrelevant or superfluous to the aims of the thesis were also omitted and several new and reworded questions were added. However, whilst the original questions that were decided upon at the end of the pilot stage were included throughout all of the interviews that were conducted the interview schedule was designed to create sufficient flexibility as to include issues that cropped up during the interviews that had been unforeseen in the review of literature and piloting stage in subsequently conducted interviews. A copy of the interview schedule is attached in appendix one.

As the amount of time that individual interviewees could offer differed a hierarchy of questions was identified, from the essential "must ask" issues to the less important questions regarding routine activity that could be left out if lack of time became a problem during the interview. This creation of a hierarchy allows comparability between interviews with all interviewees being asked the same core questions but also allows a flexibility so that with more time available on any particular interview issues could be dealt with that weren't central to the aims and objectives of the thesis.

The interview schedule was also designed in such a way as to consider that an effort to impose a false order of questioning within a conversation by the means of having a certain number of topics that you wish to discuss can often be rendered impractical in interview research. It was, therefore, necessary to follow the conversation very closely, as on many occasions interviewees would discuss issues that were to be raised later in the interview or would talk about a number of different issues whilst answering one individual question. The interview schedule needed to take account of these practical considerations but was also used to act as an element of control. For instance, each of the 'must ask' questions were also present with subtly different wordings so that if an issue was raised at an earlier time in the interview than had been planned in the interview schedule it could be returned to at a later date by a re-wording of the original question or asking for additional clarification on a point raised previously by a respondent. Questions were also designed that could both start and bring the interview to a conclusion. A typical interview schedule, therefore, would first identify the image of Cheltenham that the interviewee had, the mechanisms that they believed to be important in the construction of the image, before examining the specific question of the importance of the media coverage of festivals in the creation of the image and the extent to which they believed that Cheltenham's image was conducive to economic development.

Whilst the interview schedule was designed to be as unambiguous as possible a number of pre-arranged prompts were designed to elicit more information from an interviewee or to clarify further the answers that they had given. The use of prompts is well established in social science research and the list used in this study draws upon the suggestions made by Kidder (1991), Priest (1996), Sarantakos (1998) and May (1998). It is also suggested that the use of any prompts be similar between interviews in order to maintain comparability (May, 1998). The specific pre-arranged prompts that were used in this study were:

- Could you please elaborate on that issue/statement further?
- Can you give an example of that please?
- The point you raised in relation to .... could you please add any additional information?
- Was that the only reason?
- Are there any additional reasons why that should be so?

### **3.6.7 Conducting the interviews**

Each individual interview commenced with a very broad outline of the research and an assurance was given to each participant in relation to the confidentiality of the research. This assurance involved informing interviewees of the way in which the data generated from the interviews would be subsequently recorded and written up. Participants were advised that their identities would be masked during this process and that under no circumstances would it be possible to identify them from any publication arising from this research. Interviewees were also asked in advance of the conducting of the interview if they had any objection to the tape-recording of the interview via the use of a dictaphone. Whilst most participants had no qualms whatsoever about being tape-recorded, several sought further assurances as to the nature of the research and its outputs before giving their consent. On only one occasion was the use of any recording equipment strictly forbidden and on that occasion notes were recorded both at the time of the interview itself and immediately afterward. In practice, it appeared that interviewees quickly forgot the tape was there, but there were instances when additional information was given after the tape-recorder was switched off and these instances were manually recorded immediately afterward.

Also, one interview was conducted entirely via an exchange of numerous e-mails as the executive at the organisation felt that whilst he was unable to offer an uninterrupted period of forty five minutes in which to conduct the interview, he would be able to find a few minutes each day to answer a specific question if that question was e-mailed to him. This interview, therefore, lasted nearly two weeks and covered each of the main topics that were discussed in the face-to-face interviews. This technique had some advantages and disadvantages as it allowed a more considered reflection of each of the answers given and the wording of subsequent questions than that which would have been available in a 'normal' interview situation, but it also removes the wording from the context of how and when it was said and removes any spontaneity from the answers given by respondents.

Each of the face-to-face interviews was conducted at the offices of the company concerned and therefore the appearance of the interviewer was given careful consideration. Not only was it deemed necessary to have a sound grasp of the subject being discussed, in order to convince interviewees that they were talking to someone knowledgeable, but 'appropriate clothing' also needed to be worn as inappropriate clothing can have a disproportionately negative effect on the ability to collect data in an interview situation (Bulmer, 1986). As all of the interviewees were drawn from the upper-management of their respective organisations the interviews were conducted in shirt and tie so as to give the impression of the 'professional researcher' and give the impression to interviewees that the interview was being conducted by someone who was treating the matter of the discussion in a serious and business-like manner.

### **3.6.8 Transcription of the interviews**

Each of the interviews was listened to in the twenty four hour period following their completion. This was done for two reasons, firstly to check for any mechanical failure of either the tape or the recorder and secondly to review and reflect upon the interview with a view to conducting a constructive criticism of the 'performance' of the interviewer. The purpose of listening to the tapes just after the interviews had been completed was to identify if any items that had not been pre-conceived cropped up during the interview that could be explored in subsequent interviews. Also, in the event of a mechanical failure, some of the content of the interview could be re-constructed from memory and from hand-written notes taken during the interview. The interview that was conducted without the aid of a tape recorder was written up from the interview

notes immediately after it finished in order that anything that was not fully noted during the interview could be re-constructed from memory.

The next part of the process was to produce the transcripts of the individual face-to-face interviews as written transcripts for the interview conducted by e-mail and the one where no recording equipment was allowed had already been completed. The purpose of writing transcripts of interviews is not just simply a technical detail prior to the analysis of their content. The production of the transcripts themselves can be seen as a 'research exercise' (Heritage, 1984) as the close, repeated listenings to the recordings can often reveal previously unnoticed recurring features and may assist in the initial analysis of the content of the interviews and with this in mind, each of the transcripts were not produced by an external party. Whilst there are significant time advantages to be gained by not transcribing the interviews personally, the opportunity to become even more familiar with the content of the data produced outweighed these concerns.

There are, however, a number of different methods of transcription that are available (Silverman, 1995) ranging from transcripts which are incredibly detailed and contain notes of every pause in conversation and every 'um' and 'er' muttered by the interviewer or interviewee to transcripts that have these utterances removed in an effort to make the resultant data easier to read. A full transcription with symbols indicating pauses and voice inflections etc. was not thought to be relevant to the analysis of the research interviews as the interviews are concerned primarily with the images of place that people hold, the mechanisms that they believe to be important in the construction of these images and the subsequent impact that they have. An analysis, therefore, of the pauses in conversation, be they silences or sounds indicating that the interviewee was considering the question put to them, was not believed to add any extra value. However, most of what was said during interviews was transcribed, including the repetition of words and phrases. Omissions were made for the instances where a respondent would start an answer and then not complete the point they were making before starting on something else and also the factual information that was given at the start of the interview in relation to the interviewees role and responsibility within their business. This information was summarised separately in order to produce a profile of the people that formed the research sample.



### **3.7 The analysis and coding of qualitative data**

This section discusses the strategies that were used to extract relevant data or information from both the transcripts of the newspaper articles and also the semi-structured interviews. Although these two discreet data sets were analysed separately, they both share a common approach in the way that they were coded, analysed and managed. The first sub-section discusses the initial coding processes of the qualitative data and the second sub-section examines the specifics of how these sources of data were analysed for the purpose of this study.

Qualitative data analysis is largely an inductive, open-ended process that is not easily captured by a mechanical process in a series of 'assembly line' steps (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). However, the core of qualitative analysis consists of the coding of data to examine the way in which pieces of data gathered at different times relate and interconnect with each other (Dey, 1993). The aim, therefore, of qualitative analysis is to do more than simply describe but to interpret meanings and gain an understanding of the data gathered (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). The first stage of arriving at this 'deeper' analysis is to code the individual pieces of data gathered from both the newspaper reports and the semi-structured interviews.

#### **3.7.1 Coding the data**

The purpose of coding is to break down large text units (such as the transcript of interviews or newspaper reports) in order to make them more manageable and to establish interconnections between different sets of generated data. Coding involves identifying "patterns, themes and categories of analysis from the data" (Patton, 1990, p.390) and has become an established technique within social science research (Silverman, 1995).

The initial coding process seeks to break up the data into constituent parts and then to place them into similar categories or classes. This process allows the initial production of categories, or commonalities, within the data. The aim of this is to be able to understand the commonalities and differences in the thoughts or actions of several people. Basically, then, coding is the process of categorising and sorting the data (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). This categorisation of the data is a multi-stage process with the initial stages involving the identification of similarities or themes that exist within the data. Subsequent stages are concerned with re-assembling the data that has

been categorised into a meaningful whole, identifying the sub-sections that exist within the categories that have been created and examining the inter-relationships between categories. The creation of categories, however, is a continual process of development. For instance, an individual piece of data may belong to more than one category. Whilst there is a need to produce categories that are easy to identify and clearly distinguishable from others, this does not necessarily mean that the categories need to be mutually exclusive.

### **3.7.2 The coding procedures adopted in this study**

Drawing on the ideas discussed above, the coding of both the interview and newspaper data was broken down into three main stages

- Breaking up the data into smaller text units
- Initial development of conceptual categories
- Fine-tuning of conceptual categories and identifying hierarchies of conceptual categories and the relationships between them

The initial stage involved the break up of the transcripts of the interviews and newspaper reports into more manageable text units. In the case of the interviews, this initial categorisation was based upon the answers given to each of the 'core' questions and relate broadly to themes and responses to questions and provide a preparatory step towards further refinement and coding. For the newspaper reports, which had no pre-defined structure to aid the preliminary categorisation, the initial categories were achieved by making notes on copies of the transcripts of concepts that occurred frequently within the data. Figure 3-2, for example, is an extract taken from one of the newspaper reports to illustrate the steps taken to make this material more manageable (this extract was chosen because it is relatively short). First, the whole newspaper report was given a number and then each of the initial categories are given a name or code into which all instances of that concept are placed. In order to make this process easier, copies were made of all of the original, unaltered Microsoft Word processed transcripts and then an additional Word document was created for each of the categories. Extracts from the copies of the original documents were then 'cut' and 'pasted' into the Word document that represented the correct conceptual category. Attached to this cut and paste was a note of the original document number from which the extract was taken.

This process allows cross checking at a later date and also allows the researcher to maintain a degree of control over the data.

National Hunt Festival Document 37 (Guardian 13/3, p.6-7)

Jumping to the summit (Jamie Reid)

<p>There maybe other racetracks in Europe as spectacular as Cheltenham but the list would not be a long one. Goodwood and Chantilly are places of rare beauty on a high summer's day but neither can match <i>Cheltenham's stunning natural amphitheatre with its undulations and raking turns and its majestic backdrop of Cotswold hills and sky</i>. This is not charisma-free Kempton Park or visually challenged Newmarket. <i>This is the home of the National Hunt Festival</i> and the setting for <i>the most stirring battles of the racing year</i>. When the runners reach the top of the hill for the last time and it is suddenly apparent that one market leader is cruising or that another has 'gone" or that there are three or four challengers still in there fighting, the tension and the drawing-in of breath in the grand-stand are palpable. And there is still that punishing uphill finish to come, the scene of so many dramatic reversals of fortune such as Dawn Run's emotional Gold Cup 1986 and Pendil's last-gasp defeat 13 years before. <i>Flat racing's extended and increasingly international season has numerous peaks from 2,000 Guineas day in May to the Breeders Cup and the Japan and Melbourne Cups in November</i> But jump racing's lines converge all winter on the glittering terminus of the festival. <i>To be a great name in National Hunt racing you have to prove you can win at Cheltenham</i>, and the fact that so many of the truly great horses - from Arkle and Flyingbolt to Persian War and Istabraq - have won there not once but <i>three or four years running helps give the meeting its allure. It would be difficult to exaggerate the contrast with the Flat, where for every durable character such as Daylami or Swain there are so many explosively brilliant horses who may be seen no more than three or four times as a three-year-old before being whisked off to a career at stud. It was just after the second world war that the Cheltenham Festival, previously of secondary importance to the Grand National, began to gather momentum.</i></p>	<p>Rurality</p> <p>Tradition: The home of National Hunt racing</p> <p>Quality: The pinnacle of its field</p> <p>Quality: The pinnacle of its field</p> <p>Quality: The pinnacle of its field</p> <p>Quality: The pinnacle of its field</p> <p>Quality: The pinnacle of its field</p>
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Figure 3-2 Extract from one of the newspaper articles

The second stage of the analysis identifies what Mason (1994) describes as the development of conceptual categories or open coding. These aim to link the data to

themes and the research questions of specific projects. This involves attaching the text units from stage one to codes that indicate what that text means, but taken to higher levels of abstraction. It is important at this stage that the criteria for deciding on the content of a category is conceptually and empirically grounded (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). That is, criteria for selection should relate to the overall focus of the analysis but should also have an empirical basis in that the data can be easily classed in this way and is not 'forced' into a particular category. In order to achieve this, Dey (1993) suggests that the categories should have both an internal and external aspect. The internal aspect maintains that the categories should be meaningful to the data that it contains, whilst the external aspect suggests that each of the categories should have some relation to each other.

The third stage involves fine-tuning, for example, by subdividing and/or amalgamating the existing categories. It is also at this stage that hierarchies of codes are decided upon to reflect the relevant importance and relationships between conceptual categories. For example, the code "quality of Cheltenham's festivals and events" was broken down into information that related to performers, performances and information relating to the festivals themselves.

### **3.7.3 Data management, monitoring and storage**

The analytical procedures described above raise a number of issues concerned with managing large amounts of qualitative data, and particularly making the data accessible and amenable to analysis (Mason, 1994). This section, therefore, describes the procedures adopted in this research to assist monitoring and storage of the data. Given the complexities of managing and keeping track of hundreds of pages of newspaper reports and interview transcripts the use of an efficient data management system became essential. The key tasks that such a system needs to perform is two-fold. For instance the system needs to be able to cope with the rapid indexing and retrieval of data or text units. The system would also have to allow the researcher to place the data within analytical categories and be able to search for themes and code or index them accordingly. Conversely, the system needs to be sufficiently comprehensive so that you can trace each individual text unit back to the interview or newspaper report from which it was initially drawn.

In this case this was achieved by first copying each of the transcripts, highlighting the text with a variety of marker pens and then physically cutting and pasting data onto different sheets of paper. If a piece of data fitted into more than one conceptual category it was photocopied the requisite number of times and then placed onto the relevant pieces of paper. As each transcript and each text unit was coded the transfer of this hand-prepared categorisation onto the electronic copies of the document was relatively easy to achieve.

### **3.8 Reliability and validity in qualitative research**

Conventional measures of reliability are more comfortably associated with quantitative research (Mason, 1996) where standardised research instruments are used. In such studies, reliability is measured by observing the consistency with which the same methods of data collection produce the same results. The logic is that if you measure the same phenomenon more than once with the same instrument you should get the same measurement every time. Reliability is therefore conceptualised in terms of how reliable, accurate and precise the research instruments or tools are. This is, however, based on the assumption that methods of data generation can be conceptualised as tools and can be standardised. Given the non-standardisation of many methods of generating qualitative data (such as the many differing forms of interview), a researcher will be unable to perform simple reliability tests as the type of data generated is resistant to repeated measurement by a set of standardised instruments. Therefore, whilst qualitative researchers still maintain the importance of reliability, these concerns are slightly different to those of quantitative researchers. In qualitative research, the reliability of data is expressed in terms of ensuring and demonstrating to others that the data generated and its subsequent analysis are not only appropriate to the research question, but are also thorough, careful, honest and accurate as opposed to being true or correct (Mason, 1996). This reliability, then, is achieved by the careful collection, management and analysis of data and in providing an account of the way in which the data was collected, managed and analysed (Kirk and Miller, 1986; Silverman, 1994).

Judgements of validity are, in effect, judgements of whether you are measuring or explaining what you claim to be measuring or explaining. They are, therefore, central to the whole research process and are concerned with both conceptual and ontological clarity and the extent to which they are transferred to a relevant epistemology (Mason, 1996, Perakyla, 1997). In terms of qualitative research, concerns about validity relate to

issues connected with the validity of data generation methods and the subsequent interpretation of these results. The validity of data generation methods involves asking what it is you think that your data sources and methods of enquiry can potentially tell you and the extent to which they are able to achieve the stated aims of the project. The validity of interpretation relates, in part, to this as an inappropriate choice of methodology casts doubt upon the interpretation placed on the resulting data. However, it is also concerned with an attention to quality and rigour with which you have analysed and interpreted the data generated. Demonstrating validity in qualitative research is therefore contingent upon demonstrating the methods and processes used to achieve your interpretations. It is therefore imperative that the route can be traced which lead to any interpretation placed upon the data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Gergen and Gergen, 1991). In terms of qualitative research, this route can be outlined by keeping detailed records at every stage of the analytical process, from data generation to final conclusion, in order that it is possible to account for decisions made at each stage of the process.

### **3.9 Evaluating the research techniques used in this thesis**

One of the main criticisms of a qualitative approach is that the data generated are not conducive to generalisation about wider processes and change. With specific reference to this thesis, the choice of case study and the type of key informants may be unique to a particular area and thus making it difficult to generate theories and conceptualisations of process that would be applicable in other areas. However, the lack of information relating to the impacts of place marketing strategies, even though they are widely posited as having a positive economic impact in much of the academic literature, meant that this study was 'exploratory' in that it started with little knowledge about the way in which place marketing campaigns are received by external audiences and thus was designed to identify the way in which a particular place marketing strategy is effective in communicating images of place and the extent to which this leads to impacts upon local economic development. Central to this proposition was the adoption of a primarily qualitative research design allowing the researcher to interact and respond to issues and findings as they were identified and could be accommodated within future enquiries.

The sampling of key informants for this project was targeted at companies who had recently re-located to the area or were active in the recruitment of skilled employees from a national and international catchment and therefore this sample was based on

logic (in that images of place were believed to be of importance to them) rather than any method of statistical sampling. The sampling strategy, therefore, sought to identify relevant informants with specialist and “inside” knowledge.

It could be argued that the informants identified and approached for interview were a self-selecting target audience. The voluntary inclusion and exclusion of informants, however, is unavoidable. This reflects a general weakness in the interview method, because it relies on negotiating access to remote organisations that are under no obligation to provide information or data to researchers. There is also the possibility that the person’s role within their organisation to which access had been negotiated would have placed a slightly different emphasis on their relationship with the images of place that they received. Under the circumstances, however, it is difficult to envisage that other qualitative research methodologies designed to generate first-hand primary data, such as participant observation and focus groups, could have been any more effective.

The case study area was chosen as it offered a balance between a need to market the locality and the existence of mature and also recently commissioned festivals. Whilst this exact mix may be difficult to replicate in any comparative study, the exploratory results generated will be of interest to practitioners who may wish to study this issue in either greater depth by examining the individual impacts in a particular location or by practitioners wishing to take a more broad view in relation to the way in which the media construct images of place and their relevance to people’s experience of the world.

### **3.9.1 Conclusions**

The key strength of the research techniques used in this study of place marketing is that they allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The first stage comprised of an analysis of both the nature and extent of the images of Cheltenham that are contained within the reports of the town and its festivals and events. This information informs the second stage of the thesis which is based around semi-structured interviews with key figures in the business community and analyses the images of place that they hold, the mechanisms that they believe are important in the construction of that image and also the importance of image to local economic development. This second stage, however, forms the core of the research and represents a serious attempt to describe, analyse and account for the way in which images of place are an important part of the way in which the business community make decisions about



economic activity. These semi-structured interviews provide an effective means of identifying phenomena that were not directly observable, such as thoughts, intentions and perspectives held by the recipients of place image. Chapters five and six present the analysis of this material.

## Chapter Four: An introduction to the case study area

The purpose of this section is to give a brief introduction to the case study area and highlight the importance that are given to festivals at a local level as a means of economic development and to examine some of the local economic development issues. The section is therefore broken down into a number of sub-sections: the first sub-section gives a brief introduction to Cheltenham and its history, the second subsection identifies some of the key economic and demographic indicators and examines some of the local economic development issues. The final section explores the centrality of Cheltenham's festivals as a mechanism for dealing with these economic development issues and gives a brief history of the four festivals that were selected as the focus of this study.

Cheltenham lies some five kilometres to the east of the M5 motorway mid-way between Bristol and Birmingham on the edge of the Cotswold Hills. It is the second largest population centre in the county of Gloucestershire, after Gloucester. Cheltenham's relatively good accessibility also means that it serves as an extensive catchment and travel to work area for central and eastern Gloucestershire and the South Midlands.

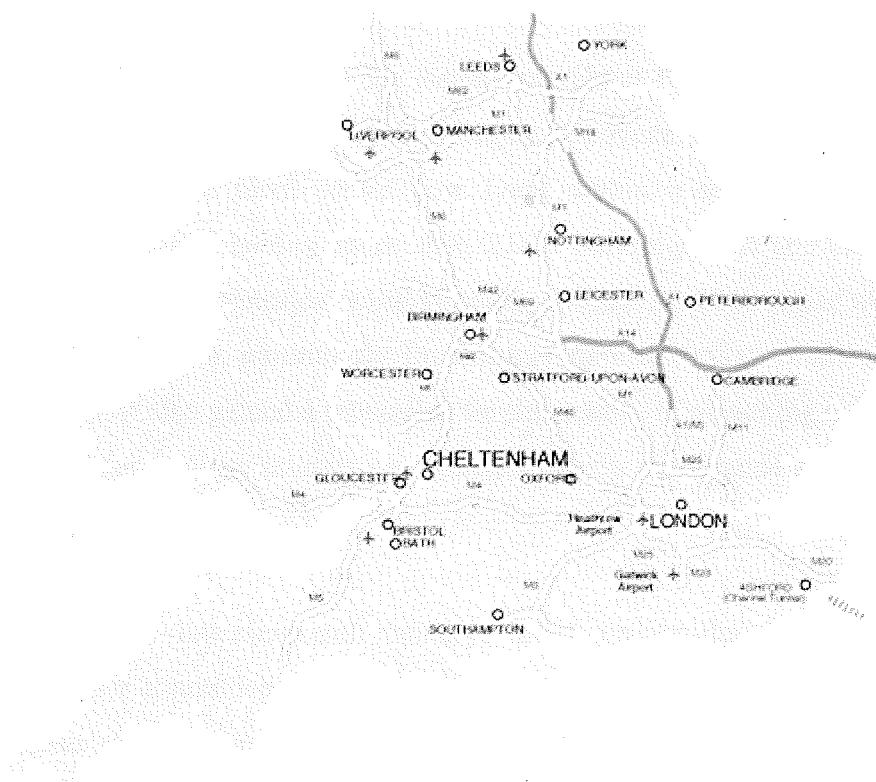


Figure 4-1 A map showing Cheltenham's location

## 4.1 A brief history of Cheltenham

Cheltenham is described as “the most complete Regency town in England and one of the few English towns in which traditional and contemporary architecture complement each other” (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2001). Cheltenham began as an Anglo-Saxon village over 1200 years ago. In 1226 it became a market town, which was the basis of its economy until the 18 century, when its medicinal waters were discovered in a field to the south of the town. These were regarded as beneficial for a whole range of illnesses and by the late 18 century the town was one of England’s leading spas.

In 1788 King George III spent five weeks at Cheltenham, drinking the waters for his health’s sake. His visit ‘set the seal’ on the town’s popularity and during the following years the number of visitors and residents increased dramatically. Between 1700 and 1800 its population rose from 1500 to over 3000 and by 1850 it was the largest town in Gloucestershire, with a population of more than 35,000. Among famous visitors were members of the English and Continental Royal families, including Princess (later Queen) Victoria, the Duke of Wellington, and the novelists Jane Austen and Lord Byron.

Cheltenham’s heyday as a spa lasted from about 1790 to 1840 and these years saw the building of the town’s many fine Regency terraces, crescents and villas which resulted in most of the town centre now lying within a conservation area of outstanding importance and having more than 2,000 buildings that are listed as having special architectural or historical merit (Cowen, 1987a). By 1840 it had also become a popular residential town, particularly for military families, many of whom had served in the Empire. It also gained a reputation for the quality of preaching in its many churches and chapels and for its schools and colleges, which encouraged still more families to settle in the town.

During the late nineteenth century, the town developed some craft industries, in particular a number of firms producing high-quality work in wood, metal, stone and plaster. During the First World War, one of those firms, H H Martyn & Co. began to manufacture aircraft components and later established the Gloster Aircraft Company, thereby beginning a long-standing connection between the town and aeronautical engineering.

In the twentieth century Cheltenham retained its position as a tourist resort and built on its existing attractions with its Festivals of Music and Literature, and National Hunt Racing festivals, employing some of the 6,000 people who work in the tourist industry. The town has also become increasingly regarded as a centre of educational excellence mainly due to the presence of the Cheltenham Proprietary College for Boys which opened in 1841 and Cheltenham Ladies College which opened thirteen years later. This reputation has also been enhanced by several 'high profile' students at these institutions, including Madonna's daughter and Princess Anne's daughter Zara Phillips.

#### 4.2 Key demographic and economic indicators

Cheltenham, on the whole, is a relatively affluent community. In 1997 its income per head (calculated by dividing GDP by total resident population) was £15,018 which is 28% above the national average (Nankivell, 2000). However, these figures are influenced by the sizeable influx of people coming in to Cheltenham to work. If an allowance is made for this by adjusting the calculation to dividing GDP by the labour force instead of the total population the differential between Cheltenham and the national average is reduced to 1% (Nankivell, 2000). The conclusion from this is that whilst commuters play an important role in enhancing the Cheltenham economy they also take a substantial amount of wealth out of it.

The total population of the local administrative area of Cheltenham (as defined by the Borough Council) in 1998 was 106,800. The demographic age profile of this population also has several significant differences in relation to the national average as a percentage of the population

Age	Cheltenham	National
<14	18.6%	19.2%
15-65	61.1%	65.1%
65>	20.3%	15.7%

Table 4-1 Comparison of Cheltenham's age profile with the national average (Source: Cheltenham Borough Council 2000)

The age profile of Cheltenham's population is much older than that of the national average, with 1 in 5 of the population being over 65. The significance of this is that with such a significant proportion of the population being over retirement age they have more leisure time than their working counterparts. Also the growth and wealth of this

sector of the economy (Long, 1998) can have a significant impact upon retailing and leisure/entertainment facilities that are offered and the way that they are marketed.

The industrial composition of Cheltenham reflects the changes that have taken place in the local economy in the past 30 years. There has been a significant decline in the traditional manufacturing base which has been centred around the aerospace and defence industries since the end of the cold war. As a result, the local authority has instigated a number of strategies in order to attract jobs in the financial, business services and public administration sectors of the economy. These policies have been relatively successful as several major national and international companies to set up headquarters buildings in the town including; Chelsea Building Society, Dowty Aerospace, Smiths Aerospace, Eagle Star, the government's General Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

Cheltenham does face some challenges however. Whilst the majority of property values in the town continue to rise, one of the town's wards is ranked within the top 20 per cent of most deprived areas in the country. This creates conflicts in trying to attract tourists, businesses and residents to a town perceived as a prosperous place to work or live, when that town is also trying to attract grant funding and regeneration partners. An additional pressure is that there is a need to create an additional 7,500 jobs within the borough of Cheltenham to meet the anticipated growth in the labour force by 2011 (Cheltenham Borough Council, 1996). There have also been a significant number of recent redundancies amongst some of the businesses that re-located to Cheltenham in the 1960s which creates an additional need to both attract new businesses to the town as well as trying to ensure that its existing businesses are not tempted away. However, somewhat paradoxically, Cheltenham needs to encourage new growth and maintaining the town's economy whilst preserving the legacy of the town's historic past which is important for attracting tourists, residents and businesses to the area.

### **4.3 Place marketing campaigns in Cheltenham**

Cheltenham does not engage in any premeditated conventional place marketing campaigns aimed at the business market. There are a few brochures, however, that are aimed solely at tourists which are available through branches of the tourist information office. The local authority do, however, have some information such as land availability

and price details that are available should they be contacted. Therefore, the principal way in which Cheltenham seeks to promote itself in view of the paradox of increased development ruining the very thing that has spurred growth within the town is through the quality of life that it can offer. A crucial part of this is the many festivals that take place within Cheltenham that are designed to offer a varied menu of sporting and cultural entertainment aimed to appeal to visitors of all ages and interests. These festivals have been instrumental in Cheltenham claiming itself to be the 'festival town of Britain' (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2001) and the year round (see table 4-3 for a calendar of the festivals that are promoted as being in Cheltenham for 2001 as an example) series of regional, national and international festivals has sustained Cheltenham's appeal to both visitors, businessmen and residents and compensates for the town's lack of a major historical or geographical attraction such as a river, cathedral or castle. These festivals allow Cheltenham to "culturally punch above its weight ... [and are] a significant factor in retaining and attracting businesses to the area" (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2002, p.4). Moreover, one of Cheltenham Borough Council's stated aims is to develop Cheltenham's reputation as a festival and event town (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2001). Central to this aim is maintaining and protecting "the image that the town has in offering a high quality of life ... [as] ... employers relocate to, and stay in, Cheltenham because the profile is good for business and is attractive to employees ... [and Cheltenham] ... would lose this image at its peril." (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2002, p.9)

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Cheltenham Folk Festival		■										
National Hunt Festival			■									
International Jazz Festival				■								
Cheese Rolling				■								
Ideal Home Exhibition				■								
Vintage Bus Rally					■							
International Festival of Music						■						
Fringe Music Festival						■						
Hailes Music Festival						■						
Morgan Sports Car Rally						■						
Cheltenham Cricket Festival						■						
Summer Dance Festival						■						
Postlip Beer Festival						■						
Guiting Festival of Music						■						
Ballroom Dancing Festival							■					
Greenbelt Festival							■					
National 10k Road Race								■				
Cheltenham Festival of Literature									■			
Festival of Christmas										■		

Table 4-2 Cheltenham's calendar of festivals and events 2001

#### 4.4 Measuring the impact of Cheltenham's festivals

Whilst a great deal of prominence has been placed on the use of festivals within Cheltenham as a means of projecting and maintaining a positive and enticing image for the town, little is known about how effective this strategy is. None of the bodies that are responsible for the management of festivals or for local economic development have any mechanism to measure the efficacy of these policies. Whilst this is often a criticism of place marketing techniques generally, to place so much faith and money into a strategy without any way of measuring its outcome needs to be called into question. The only economic assessment report that has been published in relation to one of Cheltenham's festivals was one produced for the Network Q Rally of Great Britain (Lilley and DeFranco, 2000). However, this economic impact assessment was produced with a view to being sent to areas that had expressed an interest in being the next host for this transitory festival and therefore some of its conclusions need to be treated with scepticism. For instance, whilst the report claims a positive economic impact of £11.1 million for the rally as a whole, the methodology and multiplier factors used in this

calculation are hard to justify empirically. For example, the sample sizes for local businesses are relatively small (less than 50 businesses sampled) and this sample is drawn from across the 1,175 stage miles that the rally covers.

Whilst there has only been one published economic impact assessment in relation to Cheltenham's festivals, the postponement and subsequent cancellation of the 2001 National Hunt Festival due to the foot and mouth crisis led to several media reports citing estimates of the amount of revenue that would be lost to local businesses. For instance, "The outbreak led to the postponement of the Cheltenham Festival, the climax of the National Hunt Festival season and an event crucial to the economic wellbeing of the town. Around 150,000 people visit annually, pouring around £10m into local coffers" (Vasagar *et al*, 2001, p.32). The estimate of a negative economic impact of ten million pounds is also referred to in several other articles (Savill, 2001; Weaver, 2001; Brown and Leville, 2001), however, the source of this estimate or an identification of the affected businesses is not identified within any of the articles.

#### **4.5 Brief histories of the four selected festivals**

The final sub-section considers the history of each of the four festivals that were selected to provide information on the way in which Cheltenham's festivals are covered in the media.

##### **4.5.1 The Cheltenham International Festival of Music**

The Cheltenham International Festival of Music (hereafter known as the Festival of Music) was the first of Cheltenham's post war cultural festivals, beginning a mere five weeks after the end of the Second World War and as such it is the longest running festival of its kind in Britain. The initial mandate for the festival was for it to be a showcase for British contemporary music but the festival has expanded to include more music from the classical and romantic repertoire, building around the presentation of world premieres and commissions for which the festival has become famous. The festival, which takes place annually in July, opens with a free concert entitled 'picnic in the park' with live music and fireworks and runs for two weeks.



#### **4.5.2 The Cheltenham Festival of Literature**

The Cheltenham Festival of Literature (hereafter known as the Literature Festival) began in 1949 when Gloucestershire writer John Moore organised a gathering of writers to celebrate the written word in Cheltenham. The festival, which takes place annually in October, is widely acknowledged as the very first purely literature festival to be set up in the United Kingdom, and has grown considerably from the first festival in 1949 which contained just nine events, to its current status as a huge and varied festival of international repute.

#### **4.5.3 The National Hunt Festival**

The National Hunt Festival takes place every March at Prestbury Park, however, the event can trace its origins back to 1819 when a course was marked out on the nearby Cleeve Hill and a three day event took place under the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester. The festival has been held annually since then apart from a break of 16 years from 1829 to 1845 when racing was suspended after a large group, led by Cheltenham's parish priest, the Reverend Francis Close, hurled rocks and empty bottles at the horses and riders as they claimed that gambling was immoral. Twenty years later in 1865 the meeting was moved to its present location. In the 1930s the meeting acquired its current status as the climax of the National Hunt season when the feature races, the Gold Cup and the Champion Hurdle were added. The festival has also been linked for many years with the Queen Mother and the Wednesday of the meeting is now known affectionately as 'Queen Mum's day' when she used to be on hand to present prizes for the Queen Mother Champion Chase.

#### **4.5.4 The Network Q Rally of Great Britain**

The promotional material for the Network Q Rally of Great Britain (hereafter known as the Network Q Rally) claims that it is "the UK's biggest annual sporting event of any kind, with over one million 'live' spectators"(Anonymous 68, 1999). The first Rally of Great Britain (formerly the RAC Rally) was held in March 1932. The outbreak of war in 1939 signalled the end of the Rally until June 1951, when the first ever RAC International Rally of Great Britain was held. The event's international reputation grew rapidly, especially since the formation of the FIA World Rally Championship in 1973. The British round has always been included and has often been the final rally of the season and as such often plays a crucial role in deciding the world champion. The event has been not been based in one location throughout its history and has been subject to

going to the highest bidder. As a result of its status in the motor sport calendar and the number of visitors it attracts many cities and towns are eager to host what has become one of the country's major sporting events and past hosts include London, Birmingham, Bath, York, Chester, Harrogate, Nottingham and Cardiff.

#### **4.6 Summary**

Whilst Cheltenham does not engage in any conventional place marketing campaigns, the two main agencies responsible for the promotion of the town's festivals (the Festivals and Events Department of Cheltenham Borough Council and the staff at Cheltenham Racecourse) are extremely active both in the day to day management of Cheltenham's festivals and also in examining the opportunities in relation to the procurement of festivals from other locations and the creation of new festivals for the town.

The lack of conventional promotional campaigns, however, does not mean that Cheltenham does not face serious development issues. Mergers between existing companies and relocations from the town when coupled with the expected growth in the next decade of the local workforce have created a need to develop both a defensive policy in order to retain and foster growth and development of the businesses that are already located there and also policies designed to stimulate enquiries in relation to possible relocations. Central to these policies is the projection of a strong positive image of Cheltenham that acts as an encouragement to new businesses, new, well-qualified employees for existing businesses and also maintains the regular influx of tourists. Therefore, the town's festivals, and the media attention that they receive, have become a key component of Cheltenham's economic development strategies.

## **Chapter Five: The newspaper coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the extent and nature of the newspaper coverage that Cheltenham's festivals receive. This analysis is then compared and contrasted with the coverage that Cheltenham receives in 'everyday' newspaper coverage. To achieve this the chapter is divided into four distinct sections:

- A quantitative analysis of the newspaper reports of the four selected festivals
- A qualitative analysis of the images of Cheltenham that are portrayed in the newspaper reports
- A qualitative analysis of the images of Cheltenham that are contained within other newspaper reports on the town
- A discussion of the significance of the newspaper coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals

### **5.1 Quantitative analysis of the newspaper reports of the four selected festivals**

This section summarises the extent and distribution of the content of each of the four selected festivals and is, in turn, further divided into two sub-sections. The initial sub-section identifies the total coverage for all of the festivals with subsequent sections extending the analysis to each of the festivals in turn. Finally, the results are summarised and their relevance to the focus of this study discussed.

#### **5.1.1 Analysis of content: Overall results for all festivals**

The four festivals selected for this study produced 308 published reports in the six newspapers chosen for this study, which are broken down in table 5-1.

	<i>National Hunt Festival</i>	<i>Network Q Rally</i>	<i>Music Festival</i>	<i>Literature Festival</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	48	11	6	3	68
<i>The Times</i>	42	13	15	2	72
<i>The Guardian</i>	29	6	11	1	47
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	30	6	0	0	36
<i>The Independent</i>	42	9	0	31	82
<i>The Financial Times</i>	1	0	2	0	3
<b>Total</b>	192	45	34	37	308

Table 5-1 Overall number of articles for all selected festivals

Table 5-1 shows that the distribution of the coverage both between festivals and between the newspapers is uneven, with nearly two thirds of all of the published articles relating to the National Hunt Festival. Also, the two sports festivals account for over three quarters of all of the articles published. In terms of the amount of articles published by each newspaper (shown in table 5-2), the coverage is primarily in the four mainstream broadsheet newspapers (*The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent*). However, as the table above shows, the coverage by each newspaper is not evenly distributed between the festivals. For instance, there was no coverage of either of the arts festivals in the Daily Mail.

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Percentage of total coverage</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Percentage of total coverage</i>
<i>National Hunt Festival</i>	62.34%	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	22.08%
<i>Network Q Rally</i>	14.61%	<i>The Times</i>	23.38%
<i>Music Festival</i>	11.04%	<i>The Guardian</i>	15.26%
<i>Literature Festival</i>	12.01%	<i>The Daily Mail</i>	11.69%
		<i>The Independent</i>	26.62%
		<i>The Financial Times</i>	0.97%

Table 5-2 Percentage of total coverage by festival and by newspaper

The coverage among the selected newspapers is more evenly spread, however, there was markedly less coverage in the one tabloid newspaper selected (*The Daily Mail*) and in the financial news dominated *Financial Times*. Also, the National Hunt Festival was the only one of the selected festivals to attract coverage from all of the selected newspapers.

However, the data above obscures the fact that each of the festivals took place over a different amount of time, with the time period of the festivals ranging from three days to two weeks. Therefore, table 5-3 summarises the arithmetic mean average of the number of articles printed per day using the timeframe of a week before the festival, during the festival and a week after the festival.

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Total number of</i>		<i>Days</i>		<i>Average</i>
	<i>Number</i>	<i>days that articles</i>	<i>Days with</i>	<i>without</i>	<i>per day</i>
	<i>of articles</i>	<i>were collected</i>	<i>coverage</i>	<i>coverage</i>	
<i>National Hunt Festival</i>	192	17	14	3	11.29
<i>Network Q Rally</i>	45	18	10	8	2.5
<i>Music Festival</i>	32	30	19	11	1.07
<i>Literature Festival</i>	37	31	17	14	1.19

Table 5-3 Analysis of the number of days in which articles were published for all festivals

Not only does the National Hunt Festival dominate the total number of articles, but as the festival took place over a relatively short period of time it attracted nearly 5 times as many articles per day, on average, than the festival with the second highest average number of articles per day. Again, the two sports festivals have a higher average amount of articles printed per day than the two cultural festivals that both only manage to average just over one article per day over the time period that was analysed.

An examination of the timescale over which the articles were published, broken down into the coverage that took place in the week before the festival, during the festival and the week after the festival due to the variations in the length of time that each of the festivals took place shows that the articles were printed primarily in the week preceding the festival and whilst the festival is in progress, with a much reduced amount of coverage once the festival has finished.

	<i>Number of</i>	<i>As a percentage</i>
	<i>articles</i>	<i>of the total</i>
<i>Articles printed in the week before festival</i>	94	30.52%
<i>Articles printed during the festival</i>	164	53.25%
<i>Articles printed in the week after the festival</i>	50	16.23%

Table 5-4 An analysis of the timescale over which articles were printed for all festivals

In order to gauge the actual amount of coverage the number of words published in each article was counted. This method was used in preference to the more normal method of counting column inches as the size of text and column widths used by the six newspapers varied slightly and therefore using the number of words printed gives a more accurate reflection of the amount of coverage each festival received and how much of this coverage was printed by each of the selected newspapers.

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Number of Words published</i>	<i>Percentage of total coverage</i>
<i>National Hunt Festival</i>	131715	70.19
<i>Network Q Rally</i>	28952	15.43
<i>Music Festival</i>	11647	6.2
<i>Literature Festival</i>	15348	8.18
<b>Total</b>	187662	

Table 5-5 The amount of coverage that each of the four selected festivals received

Again, the National Hunt Festival dominates the amount of published words, accounting for more than 70% of the total coverage generated by all four festivals. The Network Q Rally also generated more coverage, in terms of the word count, than both of the two cultural festivals combined. Overall, the two sports festivals accounted for more than 85% of all of the published words.

There are also subtle differences in the amount of words published by each of the six selected newspapers

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of words published</i>	<i>Number of articles published</i>	<i>Arithmetic mean average number of words per article</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	40198	68	591.147
<i>The Times</i>	43069	72	598.181
<i>The Guardian</i>	29714	47	632.213
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	22864	36	635.111
<i>The Independent</i>	50056	82	610.439
<i>The Financial Times</i>	1761	3	587
<b>Total</b>	187662	308	609.292

Table 5-6 The total amount of coverage in the six selected newspapers

From a first glance it would appear that the articles that appeared in *The Daily Mail* were slightly longer, on average, than those that appeared in any of the other newspapers. However, it must be noted that *The Daily Mail* did not cover either of the

two 'cultural' festivals and some of the articles in relation to these festivals in the 'broadsheet' press took the form of a very brief preview of who would be performing on a given day and therefore these very short articles have had a significant impact on the mean average number of words printed per article. The significance of these data, then, is that, in general, the two sports festivals generated longer articles than those for the two cultural festivals.

### 5.2.2 Analysis of content: The Literature Festival

The Literature Festival contained the third highest number of published articles of the four selected festivals in that it received 37 published articles, these articles were broken down as follows;

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Percentage of total articles</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	3	8.11%
<i>The Times</i>	2	5.41%
<i>The Guardian</i>	1	2.70%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	0	0%
<i>The Independent</i>	31	83.78%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	37	

Table 5-7 Total number of articles printed in relation to the Literature Festival

The Literature Festival had by far the most uneven distribution of articles in relation to one particular newspaper, as it was dominated by coverage in *The Independent*. However, one important caveat needs to be attached to this, in that *The Independent* was the principal sponsor of this event. It must also be noted that prior to *The Independent's* sponsorship this event was sponsored by *The Daily Telegraph* and this may have had an impact on the distribution of articles in relation to this festival as rival newspapers may not want to give publicity to an event that is sponsored by one of their competitors or cover an event which had been previously sponsored.

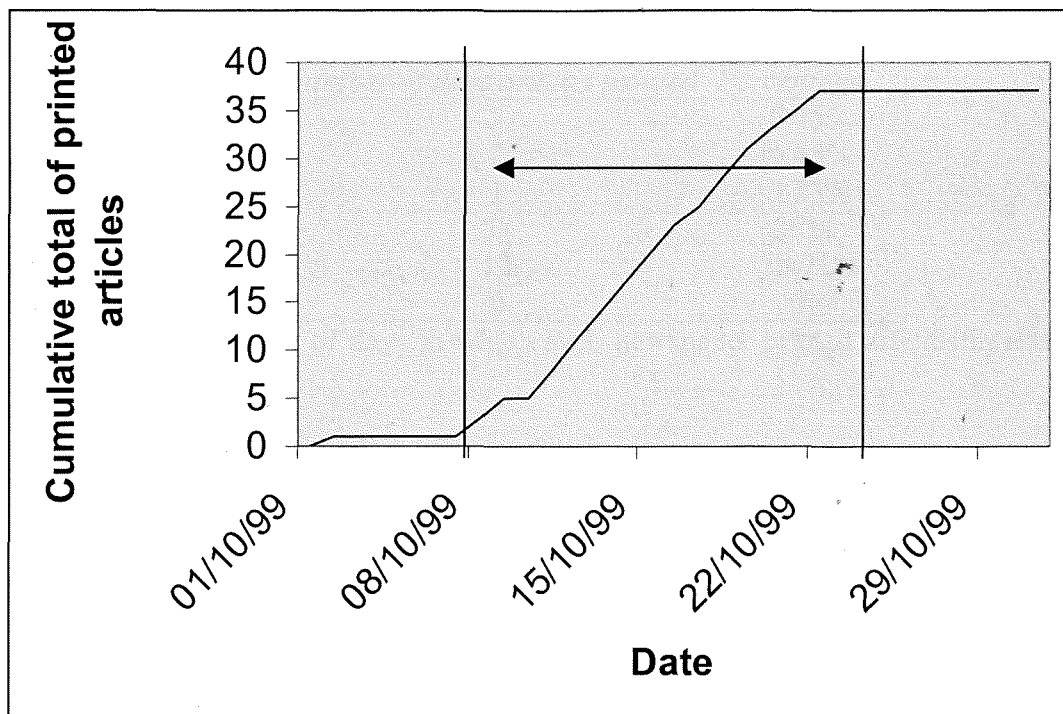


Figure 5-1 Timescale over which articles relating to the Literature Festival were printed  
 ←→ Indicates the period in which the festival took place

The timeframe for the publication of the articles, shown in figure 5-1 demonstrates that both within the week preceding the festival and in the week after the festival had finished there was very little coverage in any of the newspapers, with the vast majority of the coverage taking place in the time that the festival was in progress.

	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>As a percentage of the total</i>
<i>Articles printed in the week before the festival</i>	1	2.70%
<i>Articles printed during the festival</i>	36	97.30%
<i>Articles printed after the festival</i>	0	0%

Table 5-8 An analysis of the timescale over which articles were printed for the Literature Festival

From the maximum number of days (31) that an article could have been published on, articles were printed on 17 (54.84%) whilst there were no articles printed on the remaining 14 days (45.16%)

Somewhat unsurprisingly, given its domination of the amount of articles printed in relation to the Literature Festival, *The Independent* also has the highest proportion of the number of days for which it included at least one article in relation to the festival.



<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of days articles printed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	2	6.45%
<i>The Times</i>	2	6.45%
<i>The Guardian</i>	1	3.23%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	0	0%
<i>The Independent</i>	12	38.71%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	0	0%

Table 5-9 The number of days in which each newspaper printed articles in relation to the Literature Festival

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of words published</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>	<i>Arithmetic mean average number of words per article</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	335	2.18	111.66
<i>The Times</i>	158	1.03	79
<i>The Guardian</i>	537	3.5	537
<i>The Independent</i>	14318	93.29	461.87
<b>Total</b>	15348		414.81

Table 5-10 Amount of words printed by each of the six selected newspapers in relation to the Literature Festival

The domination of *The Independent's* coverage of the literature festival becomes even more apparent when you examine the amount of words published as the other selected newspapers gave very little coverage of this festival with the articles published in both *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* consisting of little more than a listing of who was performing on a given day. This in turn affected the average length of printed articles for the Literature Festival (414.81 words), which was significantly lower than that of the overall average of 609.292 words for all of the festivals combined.

### 5.2.3 Analysis of coverage: The Music Festival

The Music Festival received the fewest number of published reports of the four selected festivals, its 32 reports were broken down as follows;

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of articles published</i>	<i>Percentage of total articles</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	6	17.65%
<i>The Times</i>	15	44.12%
<i>The Guardian</i>	11	32.35%
<i>Daily Mail</i>	0	0%
<i>The Independent</i>	0	0%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	2	5.89%
<b>Total</b>	32	

Table 5-11 Total number of articles printed in relation to the Music Festival

The table shows that all of the published articles were in one of the broadsheet newspapers, although, somewhat surprisingly, there was no coverage whatsoever in *The Independent*.

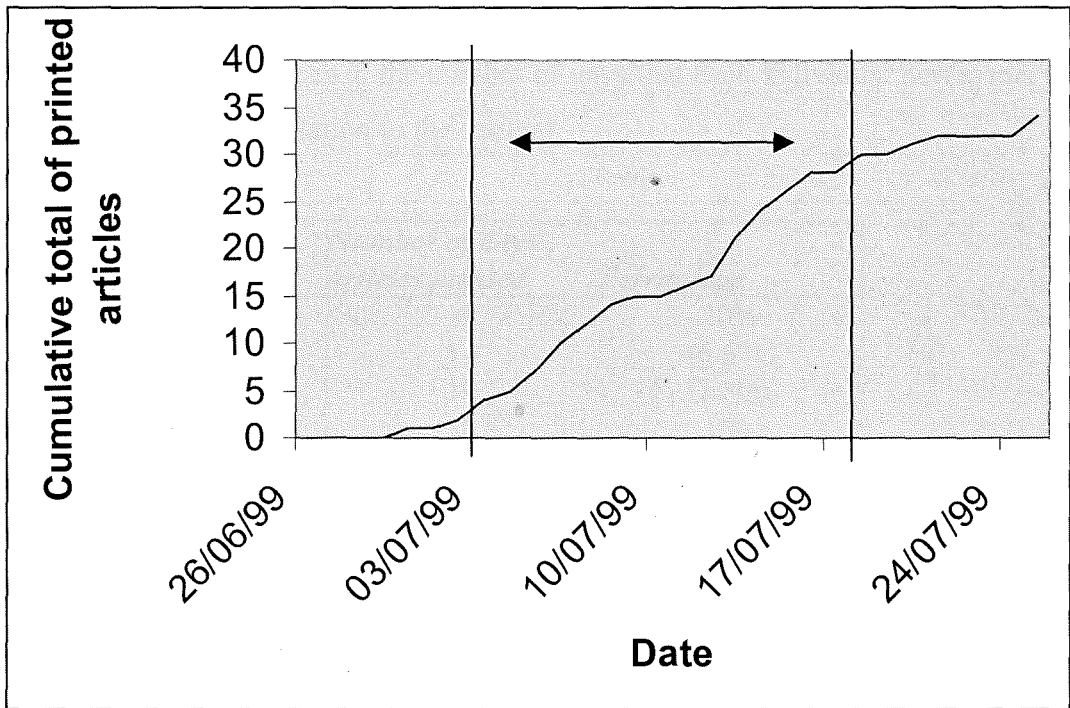


Figure 5-2 Timescale over which articles relating to the Music Festival were printed  
 ←→ Indicates the period in which the festival took place

The timescale over which the articles were published is shown in figure 5-2 and demonstrates that the majority of published articles took place once the festival was in progress.

	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>As a percentage of the total</i>
<i>Articles printed in the week before the festival</i>	2	5.88%
<i>Articles printed during the festival</i>	28	82.35%
<i>Articles printed after the festival</i>	4	11.76%

Table 5-12 An analysis of the timescale over which articles were printed for the Literature Festival

This information can be broken down further to examine the number of days on which at least one article was published. Using the timeframe of a week before the festival, during the festival and a week after the festival, the maximum total number of days in which articles could be published is 30. Of these 30 days, at least one article was published on 19 days (63.33%) with no articles being published on the remaining 11 days (36.67%).

There are also differences in the number of days that each individual newspaper printed at least one article in relation to the festival

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of days articles printed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	6	20%
<i>The Times</i>	14	46.67%
<i>The Guardian</i>	10	33.30%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	0	0%
<i>The Independent</i>	0	0%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	2	6.67%

Table 5-13 The number of days in which each newspaper printed articles in relation to the Music Festival

The table shows that none of the selected newspapers contained coverage of the festival for, on average, one day in every two.

In terms of the amount of published articles, the 32 articles had a total of 11, 647 words which are broken down as follows;

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of words</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>	<i>Arithmetic mean average number of words per article</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	3734	32.1	622.33
<i>The Times</i>	3591	30.9	239.4
<i>The Guardian</i>	3308	28.4	300.73
<i>The Financial Times</i>	1014	8.71	507
<b>Total</b>	11647		342.59

Table 5-14 Amount of words printed by each of the six selected newspapers in relation to the Music Festival

The number of words published in relation to the music festival was lower than that published for any of the other festivals and the overall average number of words per article of 342.59 was only just over half of the overall average for all four festivals of 609.292. However, this average was undoubtedly affected by the large numbers of small articles that were just designed to inform readers of a forthcoming appearance or performance and often contained less than 100 words.

#### 5.2.4 Analysis of coverage: The National Hunt Festival

The National Hunt Festival produced by far the highest number of articles of any of the four selected festivals, producing more than four times as many articles than the festival with the second highest number of published articles (The Network Q Rally). It also produced more articles than the combined totals of the other three festivals. The 192 published articles were broken down as follows:

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of articles published</i>	<i>Percentage of total articles</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	48	25%
<i>The Times</i>	42	21.88%
<i>The Guardian</i>	29	15.10%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	30	15.62%
<i>The Independent</i>	42	21.88%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	1	0.52%
<b>Total</b>	192	

Table 5-15 Total number of articles printed in relation to the National Hunt Festival

The National Hunt Festival was the only one of the four selected festivals to attract coverage from all six of the selected newspapers.

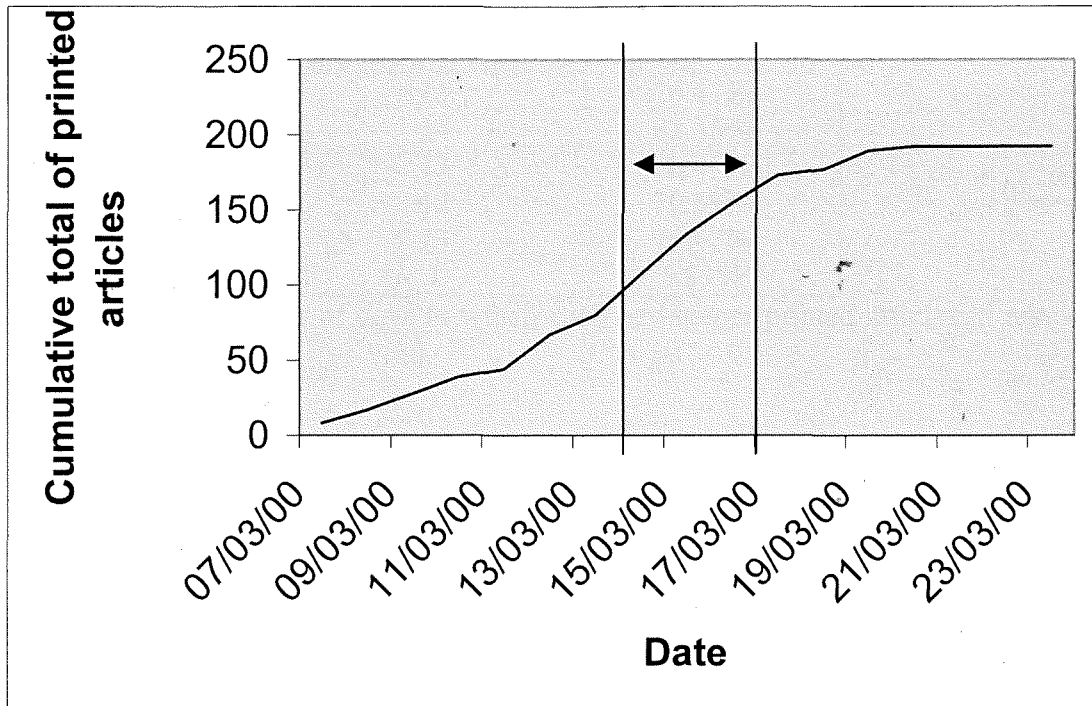


Figure 5-3 Timescale over which articles relating to the National Hunt Festival were printed

←→ Indicates the period in which the festival took place

Whilst the distribution curve of the National Hunt Festival looks broadly similar to that of the other festivals, it was the only one of the festivals that articles were published for on the first day of the time period selected. However, like the other festivals, once the festival is over the published articles soon start to diminish.

	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>As a percentage of the total</i>
<i>Articles printed in the week before the festival</i>	80	41.67%
<i>Articles printed during the festival</i>	74	38.54%
<i>Articles printed after the festival</i>	38	19.79%

Table 5-16 An analysis of the timescale over which articles were printed for the National Hunt Festival

The coverage of the National Hunt Festival was also different as it was the only festival to receive more coverage in the week preceding it than it did whilst the event was in progress. However, there is a need to attach a caveat to this, in that the festival itself only ran for three days and therefore in the week preceding the festival there was an average of 11.43 articles published per day in the six newspapers, but whilst the festival was in progress this increased to 28.

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of days</i>	
	<i>articles printed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	13	76.47%
<i>The Times</i>	14	82.35%
<i>The Guardian</i>	13	76.47%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	12	70.59%
<i>The Independent</i>	13	76.47%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	1	5.89%

Table 5-17 The number of days in which each newspaper printed articles in relation to the National Hunt Festival

With the exception of the Financial Times, all of the other selected newspapers covered the festival on roughly the same number of days, the only difference seems to be in the amount of articles on the festival that each newspaper printed each day which led to the difference in the total number of articles shown in table 5-17.

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of words published</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>	<i>Average number of words per article</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	31120	23.63	648.33
<i>The Times</i>	30175	22.91	718.45
<i>The Guardian</i>	21567	16.37	743.69
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	19535	14.83	651.17
<i>The Independent</i>	28571	21.69	680.26
<i>The Financial Times</i>	747	0.57	747
<b>Total</b>	131715		686.02

Table 5-18 Amount of words printed by each of the six selected newspapers in relation to the National Hunt Festival

Not only is the overall average number of words per article in relation to the National Hunt Festival higher than that for all the festivals as a whole but the average for each of the individual newspapers is too.

### **5.2.5 Analysis of coverage: The Network Q Rally of Great Britain**

The Network Q Rally of Great Britain received the second highest number of reports of the four selected festivals, its 45 reports were broken down as follows;

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of articles published</i>	<i>Percentage of total articles</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	11	24.45%
<i>The Times</i>	13	28.89%
<i>The Guardian</i>	6	13.33%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	6	13.33%
<i>The Financial Times</i>	0	0%
<i>The Independent</i>	9	20%
<b>Total</b>	45	

Table 5-19 Total number of articles printed in relation to the Network Q Rally

With five of the six selected newspapers containing coverage of the Network Q Rally, this festival received a range of coverage that was only surpassed by the National Hunt Festival.

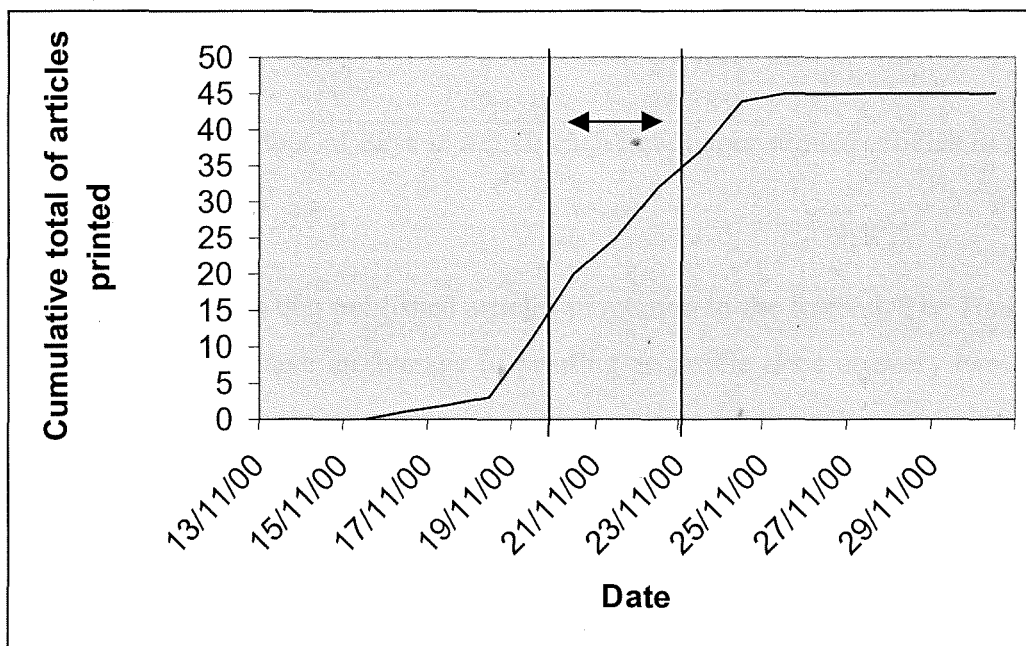


Figure 5-4 Timescale over which articles relating to the Network Q Rally were printed  
 ←→ Indicates the period in which the festival took place

The timescale over which the articles were published (figure 5-4) is similar to the other selected festivals in that the majority of the coverage took place at a time when the festival was in progress, with a smaller amount of coverage before and after the event was finished.

	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>As a percentage of the total</i>
<i>Articles printed in the week before the festival</i>	11	24.44%
<i>Articles printed during the festival</i>	26	57.77%
<i>Articles printed after the festival</i>	8	17.77%

Table 5-20 An analysis of the timescale over which articles were printed for the Network Q Rally

With this festival only lasting 4 days, the maximum number of days in which coverage could have been printed on was 18 days. Of the 18 available days, there were 10 days when the festival was covered (55.56%) and 8 days where there was no coverage in any of the newspapers (44.44%).

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of days articles printed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	6	33.30%
<i>The Times</i>	9	50%
<i>The Guardian</i>	5	27.78%
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	5	27.78%
<i>The Independent</i>	7	38.88%

Table 5-21 The number of days in which each newspaper printed articles in relation to the Network Q Rally

Of the 5 newspapers that published articles in relation to the festival, *The Times* was the only newspaper to have an average of printing an article once in every two days. *The Times* was also the only newspaper to publish articles for the entire week leading up to the event and for two days after it had finished. There was little to choose between the remaining four newspapers, with each of them covering the festival for each of the days that it was in progress with shorter pieces in the day before it started and the day after it finished.

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Number of words printed</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>	<i>Average number of words per article</i>
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	5009	17.3	455.36
<i>The Times</i>	9145	31.59	703.46
<i>The Guardian</i>	4302	14.86	717
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	3329	11.50	554.83
<i>The Independent</i>	7167	24.75	796.33
<b>Total</b>	28952		643.48

Table 5-22 Amount of words printed by each of the six selected newspapers in relation to the Network Q Rally



Not only did *The Times* print the highest number of articles, the amount of words that it published was also higher than any of the other newspapers. Three of the newspapers (*The Independent*, *The Guardian* and *The Times*) also had a higher average number of words per article than the overall average for all of the festivals. The overall average number of words per article for this festival was also higher than the average number of words per article for all of the festivals combined.

### **5.2.6 Summary of the quantitative results**

The quantitative results from the four festivals show clearly the domination of the National Hunt Festival. This domination is in terms of the amount of articles published, the amount of words published and the average length of the articles. The three other festivals between them did not generate the amount of coverage, both in terms of the number of printed articles or published words. The results also show that the two sports based festivals received a much higher degree of media coverage than the two cultural festivals. This may, in part, be due to the higher amounts of space dedicated to sporting events in the national press when compared to the space available to cultural events. The amount of coverage that was in each of the individual newspapers went some way to justifying the methodological assumption that the two cultural festivals would be poorly reported in the tabloid press. Although only one tabloid newspaper was used in this study as a result of this assumption, there was no coverage whatsoever in this newspaper and can be considered highly unlikely that any other tabloid newspaper contained any coverage of these two festivals.

The coverage that the Literature Festival received was undoubtedly influenced by having one of the newspapers selected for this study (*The Independent*) as its major sponsor. This effectively reduced the coverage that this festival received in the other newspapers to short pieces just mentioning that the festival was currently taking place. Whilst this is not exactly surprising, as none of the other newspapers would want to give free publicity to a festival sponsored by one of their main rivals, it is an important lesson that needs to be heeded by anyone looking for sponsorship for an festival as choosing a particular sponsor may have an impact on how and, as it was in this case, how many people get to perceive the festival in question.

Whilst the rationale for selecting *The Financial Times* as one of the newspapers to be used in the study due to its market share being primarily amongst business managers and decision makers appeared to be sensible, the lack of coverage that it contained in relation to the festivals indicates that through this particular newspaper few images of place could be transferred through its festival coverage.

The timescale over which the articles were published was broadly similar for all four of the festivals. The typical pattern was for there to be no coverage of the festival until a couple of days before its commencement, then the coverage would be concentrated whilst the festival was in progress and finally the coverage would die off usually a day or two after the festival had finished. The one notable exception to this was the National Hunt Festival, which although its pattern of coverage was not dissimilar from that described above, it was the only one of the selected festivals to have attracted coverage from the beginning of the selected time period (one week before the festival commenced). A cursory examination of the newspaper coverage of this festival that predate this time period revealed that the festival was regularly mentioned in newspaper articles dating back several months before the festival took place.

The newspaper coverage of the National Hunt Festival was also unique as it was the only one of the four selected festivals to receive coverage outside of the designated section of the newspaper that most closely related to the content of the individual festival. For example, all of the coverage of both the Music and Literature festival was contained within the 'arts' or 'culture' section of the newspapers that covered the event. The coverage of the National Hunt Festival made it on to the front pages of five of the six selected newspapers (all apart from *The Financial Times*) and also received coverage in the 'society' pages where prominent celebrities were pictured attending the festival. This migration from the specialist sections (e.g. sports, arts etc.) of the newspapers is significant as it has the potential to transmit images of place to, what could be argued is, more of a mass market audience as people may normally not read sections of the newspaper that have little or no interest to them.

The number of articles printed in relation to the four selected festivals for one year outnumbered in a ratio of approximately four to one the articles relating to Cheltenham that were found in the news section of the selected newspapers over a three year period. Therefore, Cheltenham's festivals help to keep a constant reference to the town

throughout the national press. These images, then, are constantly being received by the purchasers and readers of the national press and serve to create, maintain and reinforce the images of Cheltenham that the readership may already have. This increased media attention has the ability to bring significant economic benefits to a location as, “media portrayal [of place] has implications for the position of cities in the growing international and national competition for various resources such as tourism, investments and businesses” (Avraham, 2000, p.363).

### **5.3 Qualitative analysis of the images of Cheltenham contained within the newspaper reports**

The section analyses the key characteristics, constructs and stereotypes that are contained within the newspaper coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals. This analysis is broken down into two main areas: the analysis of the images of Cheltenham that were portrayed in the four selected festivals and the images of Cheltenham that are contained within the reports on the town when a story referring to the town, which is contained within the ‘news’ sections of the newspaper (i.e. not in a cultural, sport or entertainment section for example) and was published in one of the six selected newspapers used in this study. These two discreet selections of data are then compared and contrasted to examine the way in which Cheltenham is covered within the national press.

#### **5.3.1 Qualitative analysis of the images of contained within the newspaper reports relating to the four selected festivals**

An analysis of these reports resulted in the establishment of three main categories in the depiction of Cheltenham in the newspaper coverage of its events. The main categories were:

- Quality
- Rurality
- The old and The new (tradition/innovation)

The analysis of the newspaper reports is shown in more depth in figure 5-5

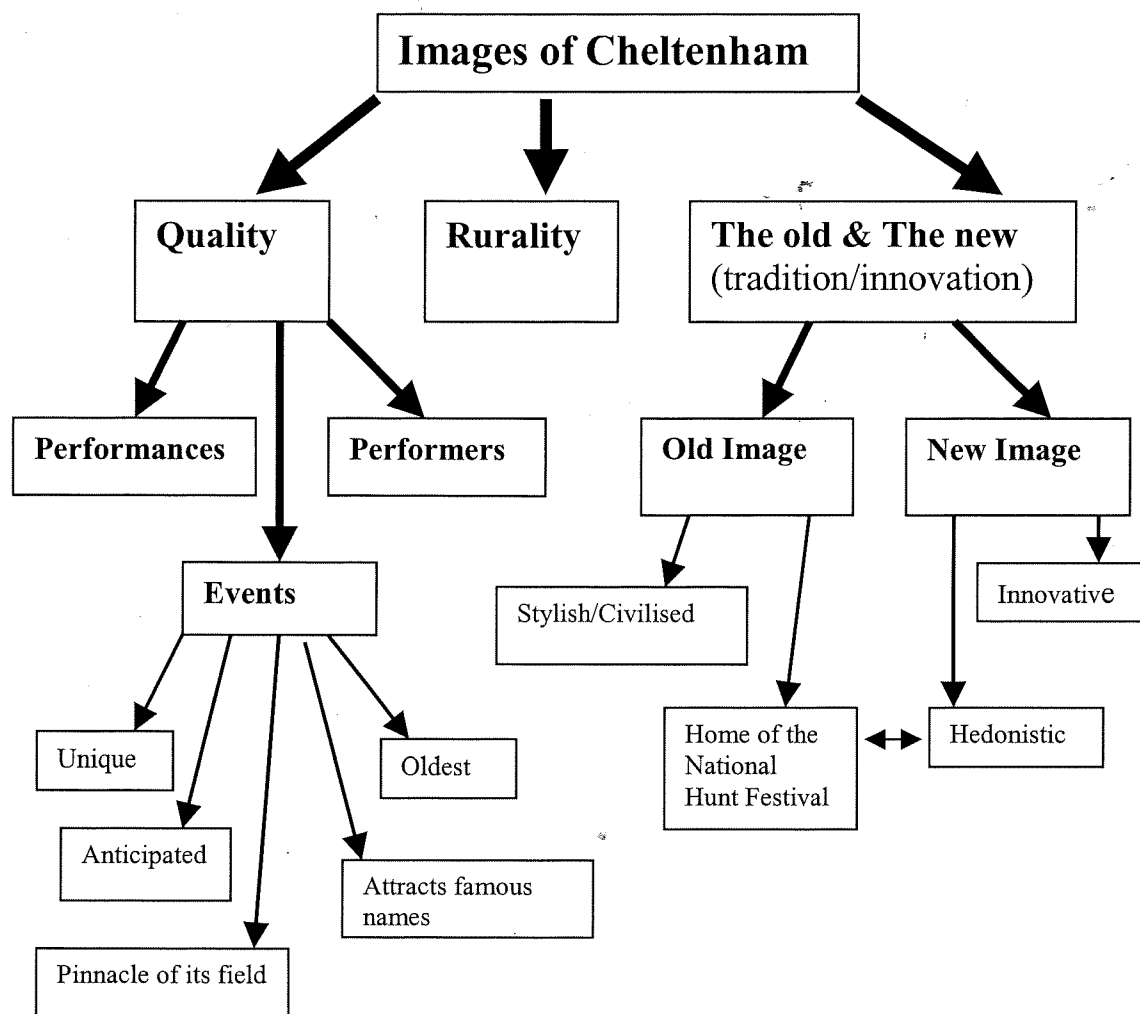


Figure 5-5 Qualitative analysis of the newspaper coverage of Cheltenham’s festivals

## 5.4 Quality

Much of the coverage sought to portray Cheltenham’s festivals as being imbued with quality. This was achieved in a number of ways such as references to the quality of performances within the festivals, the quality of individual performers and the quality of the events themselves.

### 5.4.1 Quality of performers and performances at Cheltenham’s festivals

One of the principal mechanisms by which the quality of Cheltenham’s festivals is portrayed was through the many references to the fact that Cheltenham’s festivals were hosting a number of premieres at varying geographical scales. For instance, Anonymous 14 (1999, p.82) notes that, “the programme also included the European premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage’s silent cities”. This premiere by the Festival of Music’s

composer in residence was also mentioned in articles by Kennedy (1999) and Rye (1999b). There were also premieres at a world level at the Music Festival as “one of Britain’s finest ensembles, the Vellinger Quartet, visits the festival, with vintage Mozart and a world premiere by the young composer Huw Watkins” (Anonymous 18, 1999, p.39). National premieres are also mentioned, such as the British premiere of Roland Caltabiano’s *Marrying the Hangman* (Fairman, 1999). Not only is the quality of the individual performances singled out, but it is also acknowledged that Cheltenham’s festivals are of a significant stature to attract an infrequent performance from a highly accredited artist, with a performance of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra being referred to as them making a “rare excursion from their Manchester home” (Clements, 1999, p.21).

Not only are the individual performances singled out for praise within the newspaper coverage, the individual performers are also highlighted in order to convey an image of quality for Cheltenham’s festivals. This is achieved in two different ways, articles identify the quality of specific performers by reference to awards that performers have won or by bestowing accolades upon performers in the reports on the festival.

By highlighting the awards that performers have won or been nominated for in the newspaper reports of the festivals gives the impression of quality for Cheltenham’s festivals as it infers that the festivals are important enough and have an enviable stature within their particular field as they are able to attract the ‘biggest names’. For instance, “The first full week of the Cheltenham festival opens with recitals by Natalie Klein and Emma Johnson, both of them past winners of the BBC Young Musician of the Year” (Anonymous 16, 1999, p.19). It is not only the winners of national awards that are singled out as, “Frank McCourt, Pulitzer-winning chronicler of Irish misery, will draw huge crowds” (Anonymous 20, 1999, p.10). Not only are past winners represented, but also those who have been nominated for awards ceremonies that had not taken place as at the time of the festival as, “readings from ... one of this year’s Booker nominees, Andrew O’Hagan” (Anonymous 30, 1999, p.11), were one of the featured events at the Literature Festival.

A number of adjectives are used to describe the various performers that appear at the festivals that serve to further reinforce the overall impression that the festivals are of a level of importance where they can attract the best people in their particular field of

endeavour to attend. Some of these statements are very general, such as “Cheltenham always brings in some really big names” (Anonymous 34, 1999, p.10). The Literature Festival is also reported to be a magnet for the best authors as “some of the world’s most distinguished writers will fly in” (Anonymous 20, 1999, p.10) or having a “star-studded line up” (Anonymous 28, 1999, p.2). A number of subjective accolades are also bestowed upon individual performers, who are variously referred to as; “world’s finest” (Anonymous 3, 1999, p.34) “best home-grown artists” (Anonymous 6, 1999, p.40), “the BBC’s most celebrated journalist” (Anonymous 25, 1999, p.10), “One of Britain’s finest ensembles” (Anonymous 36, 1999, p.10) and also an author who is “frequently ranked amongst the century’s most important writers” (Anonymous 25, 1999, p.10).

Not only are individuals selected for such high praise, but there are also instances where the amount of quality performers that are taking part in the festivals is noted by journalists. For instance, it is claimed that the National Hunt Festival “features all the best horses in the national hunt game” (Foley, 2000, p.11). It is also claimed that the abundance of quality horses taking part at the National Hunt Festival makes it especially hard to pick one particular quality performer from as “in a normal race at one of the gaff tracks you can probably pick the winner from one of three horses, at Cheltenham you’ll be lucky if the choice can be narrowed down to eight or nine” (Hey, 2000, p.8).

#### **5.4.2 The Quality of Cheltenham’s festivals**

It is not only the individual and groups of performers that are singled out as personifying the quality of festival that Cheltenham has to offer, the festivals themselves are lavished with praise and are referred to as:

- Pinnacle of its field
- Unique
- Anticipated
- Oldest
- Attracts famous names

Many reporters refer to Cheltenham’s festivals as the pinnacle of their particular field of endeavour. It is claimed that “a marketing guru would describe it as the ‘market leader’” (Anonymous 33, 1999, p.19) when referring to the Literature Festival. It is also reported that the National Hunt Festival not only is the pinnacle of its field but the event

“dominates national hunt racing more than any individual event dominates any sport in these islands” (Anonymous 44, 2000, p.35). Various adjectives are used to further reinforce the position of the National Hunt Festival as the highlight of the jump racing calendar, with commentators claiming that it has, “an incomparable parade of jump racing”, “the supreme test of steeple chasing quality” (Hart, 2000, p.30), “the hallowed Cheltenham festival” (Scudamore, 2000, p.69), “national hunt’s defining moment” (Edmonson, 2000c, p.26), “as good as national hunt racing gets” (Oaksey 2000b, p.40). Reed (2000, p.6) draws an analogy between the national hunt season and the flat racing season in that “flat racing’s extended and increasingly international season has numerous peaks from 2,000 guineas day in May to the Breeder’s Cup and the Japan and Melbourne Cups in November. But jump racing’s lines converge all winter in the glittering terminus of the festival.”

The importance of the festival to its competitors is also referred to via published interviews. For instance, champion jockey elect, Mick Fitzgerald, who suffered an injury in the weeks leading up to the festival was quoted as saying that “if it had been the [Cheltenham] festival starting the following day, I would have been there, but I gave Towcester a miss, if it had been Cheltenham I would have pushed myself to be okay, but the truth is that I am still not 100%” (Longmore 2000c, p.19). An interview with a stable lad to one of the top trainers refers to the importance of the festival to the staff as “to win at Cheltenham ... is what we work all year for” (Scott, 2000, p.10). The National Hunt Festival is not only believed to be at the pinnacle of its field but it is also claimed that the festival is beyond reproach in that “how could I criticise Cheltenham? Cheltenham as it exists is exactly what people want, sport’s annual Woodstock, a three day feast of peace, harmony and understanding”. Interestingly, the quotes above indicate that the National Hunt Festival has become so synonymous with Cheltenham that it is simply referred to as ‘Cheltenham’. This not only serves to highlight the link between place and festivals but also serves to give the impression that, for some, an event can become so associated with one location that it becomes so ingrained into popular consciousness that it becomes inseparable from its host location.

Reporters often use quotes from key figures within their specialist field to show how important the festival in Cheltenham is to them and thus re-enforce the stature of Cheltenham’s festivals as being at the pinnacle of their field. For instance, a leading national hunt jockey is quoted as saying “I would prefer to win one race at Cheltenham

rather than ten at Auteil” and he goes on to say that “it is a dream come true to win at the festival”. (Evans, 2000b, p.41). This is further re-enforced by reporters noting that “dreamers want a winner in the national [a reference to the Grand National at Aintree), but purists want a winner at Cheltenham” Foley (2000, p.115). Similar sentiments are expressed by Austen (2000, p.24) in that to win “the Grand National was always considered a lottery and a fluke ... it was not for the purist and the Gold Cup and the Champion Hurdle were”. The National Hunt Festival is also referred to as the ultimate test for jockeys and trainers alike as “to be a great name in national hunt racing you have to prove that you can win at Cheltenham” (Reed, 2000, p.6). The theme of ‘proving yourself’ by wining at Cheltenham is expanded upon by the making of comparisons between other high profile sports and some of their most famous competitors, “as Colin Montgomerie will tell you, there are few more irritating situations in sport than to be known for what you have failed to do as for what you have achieved. If Venetia Williams does not saddle a winner at Cheltenham this week she may start to empathise with the major-less Scotsman”. (Wood, 2000f, p.26).

Reporters also use direct quotations from key figures to demonstrate that the Cheltenham festival is unique and like no other. The retiring Clerk of the Course at Cheltenham Racecourse is quoted as saying that “there is that moment every year, when I practically burst into tears, when the tapes go up for the first race and there is a spontaneous roar. The thought of that happening at any other racecourse is just silly” (Anonymous 44, 2000, p.35). Edmonson (2000c, p.36) uses a quote from the reigning (at the time) champion jockey, Mick Fitzgerald, who claims that “when I wake up on Tuesday it won’t feel like just another day, deep down you know that something special is about to happen ... the atmosphere at Cheltenham is like no other. There’s a certain tension there”. General statements are also made that add to this feeling of ‘uniqueness’, Rock (2000c, p.14) simply writes, “after all, there is only one Cheltenham”, similarly, Evans (2000b, p.41) claims that “there is nothing like Cheltenham anywhere in the world”. This ‘uniqueness’ is also attributed to be of benefit to the town as “the main beneficiary will be [the town of] Cheltenham, whose unique atmosphere and appeal makes it the pied piper of jump racing” (Anonymous 44, 2000, p.35).

The reports also serve to give the impression that the Cheltenham festivals are something that people look forward to and are something that are highly anticipated by both participants and spectators. For instance, Brown (1999, p.41) succinctly notes that,



“Cheltenham glistens on the horizon” and Cameron (2000, p.19) is equally brief in stating that “every Cheltenham festival is eagerly anticipated”. Direct quotes are also used again to demonstrate how much some of the participants in the festival look forward to taking part in the festival. Lenny Lungo, a prominent trainer and owner of several horses, is quoted by Scott (2000, p.10) as saying “Cheltenham is wonderful, I can hardly wait ... Cheltenham is what gives us the buzz”. Mackenzie (2000, p.84) attributes another leading jockey as “look [ing] forward to Cheltenham as the highlight of every year”. Reference is also made to the number of people who look forward to a Cheltenham festival with Lee (2000d, p.43) claiming that the National Hunt Festival is “life’s annual treat for tens of thousands of people”. Edmonson (2000, p.26) refers not only to the amount of people that look forward with anticipation to the festival, but also credits them with producing a mass out-pouring of relief that rivals anything else in the sporting world as, “at around two o’clock this afternoon we will hear the sweetest noise in racing, perhaps in sport, when the Cheltenham roar greets those runners who embark on ... the opening contest of the millennium festival. It is a clamour of relief, that the great day is finally here”.

With the current trend towards creating festival and events as a method of promoting images of place it may be significant that, in relation to the Literature Festival, it was often noted that this festival was the first one of its kind in this country. The commencement of the festival in that “a half-century has gone by since John Moore, a writer on countryside matters and a Cheltenham dweller, called up a few friends (like Joyce Grenfell and Ralph Richardson) and invited them to come and speak on bookish subjects in front of a small local audience at Cheltenham Town Hall. In doing so, he created the idea of the literary festival. He invented the multi-event, multimedia, meet the author book fest that has subtly changed the image of the writer from a study-haunting solitary in to something closer to a performing seal, balancing ironies and self-depreciation with splashy display.” (Anonymous 20, 1999, p.10). Other references to this festival being the oldest of its kind were much briefer, with Anonymous 33 (199, p.10) simply noting that, “it was the first festival of literature in Britain” and Anonymous 28 (1999, p.2) reporting that it is “the world’s oldest literary festival”. Anonymous 20 (1999, p.20) is more lavishing in their praise, referring to the festival as “the nation’s first, biggest and best festival of literature”.

Various celebrities and members of the Royal family were pictured in the newspapers attending the National Hunt Festival. These pictures often adorned the front and feature pages of the newspaper, reflecting the 'newsworthiness' of the festival. On the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2000 all but one of the selected newspapers (*The Financial Times*) had a article relating to the attendance at the festival of Zara Phillips (the daughter of Princess Anne) on the front page of the newspaper. Other articles also alluded to the significance of the festival to the oldest member of the royal family (at the time), the queen mother, as "there is no doubting where the Queen Mother's loyalties lie ... she will drive to Cheltenham tomorrow to take her place among the sell-out 50,000 crowd ... and she wouldn't miss the Cheltenham festival for the world" (Dempster, 2000, p.45). The attraction of the National Hunt Festival also extends to famous names from other sports as it is reported that "Sir Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, is the latest in a long line of footballing celebrities, following the likes of Bryan Robson, Paul Gascoigne and Vinnie Jones, to have been won over by the excitement of Cheltenham" (Anonymous 56, 2000, p.7).

## **5.5 Rurality**

Cheltenham is portrayed as a rural location in many of the newspaper reports of the festivals, Hayward (2000, p.42) notes that, "Cheltenham is one of those rural havens where a century can seem like no time at all". Baker (2000, p.8) refers to the "magnificent rural atmosphere". Other reporters refer specifically to Prestbury Park, the home of the National Hunt Festival, and also the venue that hosted the Network Q Rally of Great Britain, Reed (2000, p.6) claims that "there may be other race tracks in Europe as spectacular as Cheltenham, but the list would not be a long one. Goodwood and Chantilly are places of rare beauty on a summer's day, but neither can match Cheltenham's stunning natural amphitheatre with its undulations and raking turns and its majestic backdrop of Cotswold hills and sky. This is not charisma free Kempton Park or the visually challenged Newmarket, this is ... the setting for the most stirring battles of the racing year".

The theme of the setting for the National Hunt Festival is also mentioned by Powell (2000, p.16) who refers to "the annual drama played out against the stunning backdrop of Cleeve Hill", The Course Inspector (2000, p.37) is similarly impressed by "the finest sight in racing, the views across to Cleve Hill". Some of the references to the rurality of Cheltenham's location are almost poetic in nature, for instance, Reed (2000g, p.31)

gives an account of the start of the first day of the festival, “as the sun climbed over Cheltenham’s Prestbury Park racecourse at 7-30 yesterday morning, the skylarks were singing, the grass was thick with dew and pockets of mist still hung to the lower reaches of Cleeve Hill”. Reed (2000, p.6) is similarly poetic in referring to Cheltenham as a place where “the love of the jumping horse is as rich and deep as the Cotswold soil”.

## **5.6 The old and the new: Contrasting the traditional and innovative images of Cheltenham**

The newspaper reports on the festival often contain contradictory images of Cheltenham, the easiest way to comprehend these is to conceptualise them as evidence of a changing image of the town. Therefore, the coverage contains references to what could be termed the old/traditional image of Cheltenham as a stylish, civilised, conservative spa town that is the home of the National Hunt Festival as well as what could be termed a new image, containing elements of a town that is innovative, and hedonistic.

### **5.6.1 Cheltenham’s old/traditional image**

It would appear that there is a view amongst some reporters that there is a consensus amongst their readers as to the image of Cheltenham as “the Gloucestershire town, as readers will know, is rather refined and gentle” (Anonymous 37, 1999, p.11). This view is re-enforced by a number of adjectives that are used in conjunction with references to Cheltenham, such as “the stylish town” (Anonymous 43, 1999, p.40), “the elegant regency promenade” (Reed, 2000, p.6), “quietly civilised” (Maddocks, 1999b, p.8) and “the old spa town” (Anonymous 33, 1999, p.10).

Contrasts are also drawn between Cheltenham and places that are seen as the very antithesis of the image of Cheltenham that reporters appear to think exists in the minds of their readers. For instance, Lee (2000b, p.52) refers to a public meeting that was organised in Ireland prior to the National Hunt Festival where Ireland’s most prolific trainers met to discuss the festival with the general public. Lee described the location of the meeting as “a roadside night club outside Dundalk, half a mile from the border of that tormented part of Ireland where generations have grown up burdened by unrest and distrust. It felt improbably remote from the placid, privileged Cotswolds”. A similar contrast is made by Eason (1999c, p.31) who refers to the start of the Network Q Rally

as the continuation of “the contest between England and Scotland has moved {they had met the week before in the play-off for the European Football Championships} from the hurly-burly of Wembley to the quiet regency streets of Cheltenham, where starting tomorrow at the racecourse, Richard Burns and Colin McRae will slug it out to decide who is the best”.

Cheltenham is also portrayed as having a conservative population. Reference to this is made by Rock (2000, p.12) who refers to Cheltenham’s decision makers as “august burghers” in relation to their decision that all the sellers of the Big Issue should wear identical blue coats. The organisers of the Music Festival are also referred to as conservative in that “an all-Kagel<sup>1</sup> performance is just the sort of event that Cheltenham would never mount. That, though, may be an argument in favour of its conservatism”.

Not only is the National Hunt Festival the festival which received the most newspaper coverage, both in terms of the number of articles published and in the number of words published, from the four selected festivals, but there were also references to this festival in the coverage of Cheltenham’s other festivals and thus it can be seen as being synonymous with the town and therefore part of its traditional image. For instance, it is reported that after Richard Burns won the Network Q Rally that, “Cheltenham welcomed him back to the winner’s enclosure like another thoroughbred when he arrived at the rally’s race-course headquarters ...[and that] the champagne sprayed by Burns from the bonnet of his Subaru will be the last to be spilled by the rally boys in the Cotswold town, which next year reverts back to its usual status as a temple of traditional horse power” (Baker, 1999, p.42). The reports on the Music Festival also contain references to, and make analogies with, the National Hunt Festival, as it is claimed that the festival is “the other Cheltenham festival, for thoroughbred horses read thoroughbred musicians” (Anonymous 12, 1999, p.15).

### **5.6.2 Contrasts in the image of Cheltenham – The old and the new together**

Nowhere is the contrast between what could be termed the old image of Cheltenham with its new image better portrayed by that in the juxtaposition of the characteristics of the featured composer at the Music Festival and the festival’s composer in residence referred to by Brown (1999, p.41),

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to Mauricio Kagel the German-Argentinean composer born in 1931 and is described as being “among the most distinctive composers of contemporary music” (Anonymous 69, 2002).

The Elgar homage comes just in time for the composer's arrival on the £20 banknote, moustache neatly turned, face full of pomp and glory, it all seems so cosy, so traditionally English, and a little surprising. Wasn't Michael Berkeley, the festival director, the man with a mission to shake Cheltenham's image of spa town gentility, of a festival dedicated to the musical equivalent of tea, scones and cucumber sandwiches? But wait a minute, Rubbing against Elgar is the contemporary figure of Mark-Anthony Turnage, this year's composer in-residence; his music is included in nine concerts. Look at the two composers' faces. They appear to come from different planets. Elgar resembles a colonel in India, or a military bandsman. Turnage's hair and street warrior clothing suggest the late 1990s Arsenal supporter that he is. And look at the expression marks printed in their scores. Elgar's favourite term is 'Nobilmente', usually applied to stick out your chest melodies, often played on strings. Turnage writes his expressions in blunt English, and above figure 57 in the orchestral piece 'Drowned out', when brass and woodwind drag up their notes from the ocean floor, he writes 'very nasty'

### **5.6.3 A new image for Cheltenham: Innovation and hedonism**

Set against this 'traditional' image of Cheltenham as a stylish, civilised, conservative spa town are a number of images which are radically different, the first of which are references that claim that events at Cheltenham's festivals are innovative and different, and go against what could be termed 'conservative'. For instance, The Course Inspector (2000, p.37) claims that "the key to Cheltenham's phenomenal success is that the place never stands still. Year after year innovations appear to make the flustered customer feel more comfortable". One of these innovations, perhaps prompted by the conspicuous consumption of alcohol at the National Hunt Festival, is "the first chemist to open on a British racecourse" (Armytage, 2000, p.42). The reviews of some of the performances at the Music Festival also indicate that the conservative ethos of its organisers may have been overstated. Various performances are referred to as "striding out from twentieth century tradition" (Maddocks, 1999, p.9), "wildly daring" Dove (1999, p.22), "courageous" Lerner (1999b, p.46) and "an adventurous evening of music theatre" (Fairman, 1999, p.34).

The National Hunt Festival is described by many reporters as a place for a giant party, as, "every year thousands of people leave Cheltenham drunk and broke" (Anonymous 54, 2000, p.36). Hey (2000, p.11) is more candid in relation to the three key elements of the festival, which he lists in the following order "drinking, betting and watching the races". However, he goes on to say that the first one of the key elements has an effect on the others as "of course, Cheltenham being Cheltenham, it is not unlikely that drink will intrude upon your betting considerations ... and the quest to get a drink will often mean

that you miss watching the racing, but who cares?" The consumption habits of the festival patrons are also noted as "Cheltenham means many things to many thousands of people, it means passion, adrenaline and unbreakable habit. A test of stamina and a social haze ... it means 14,000 bottles of champagne, a quarter of a million pints of beer and nine tons of fish, and that is simply on the course" (Anonymous 43, 2000, p.40).

The visiting Irish festival goers also receive special mention, as allegedly, the festival "is all to do with the craic, for the festival is supposed to be the best craic of all" (Anonymous 54, 2000, p.36). Thomson (2000, p.86) also refers to the revelry of Cheltenham's Irish visitors by asking the rhetorical question "whoever heard of something Irish that couldn't hold his food and drink during Cheltenham week?" For Baker (2000, p.8) "the seething stands and swaying Irishmen" are an integral part of the 'Cheltenham experience'.

The party atmosphere also extends beyond the confines of the racecourse as "wild drunken parties are not unknown in the Cotswolds this week" Evans (2000b, p.41) and "pubs along the route {to the racecourse} were open from first light, offering hangover cures and champagne breakfasts in equal measure". It would also appear that excessive alcohol consumption does not prevent everyone from placing a bet on the festival, as, on average it was estimated that £1m was gambled on-course for each of the festival's 20 races (Oliver, 2000) and the Tote was alleged to be taking bets at the rate of 16 per second (McGrory, 2000). The excesses of the festival also seem to afflict the journalists who cover the event, as is noted by Clower (2000, p.17), "many of my companions have used the three days of the festival as an annual excuse to abuse their livers and their bank balances with equal enthusiasm".

## **5.7 The images of Cheltenham contained within other newspaper articles**

The images of Cheltenham that are contained within other newspaper reports were drawn from eighty one articles that were printed over a three year period. The majority, of these articles, however, were mostly factual and contained little in the way of information that could be analysed in relation to the creation of an image for Cheltenham. While there was little in the way of data to analyse, the images of Cheltenham contained within the other news reports on the town are not overly

dissimilar from the images of the town that are contained within the newspaper reports of Cheltenham's festivals. With the exception of the category portraying Cheltenham as a rural location all of the categories that were identified as the components of Cheltenham's image from the festival reports are present in the reports from news stories that are based in the town.

### **5.7.1 Quality**

Cheltenham's festivals are often referred to as part of a news article or an article which gives an overview of the town. For instance, Keating (1999) notes that, "classy and cool Cheltenham Spa has always been hot stuff at festivals. The town stages an annual music jamboree as well as a world-famed lit-fest; the high-summer marquee-ringed cricket festival is the game's oldest such survivor". The promotion of Cheltenham Town Football Club to the Football League at the end of the 1998-1999 football season prompted coverage by many of the newspapers in which Cheltenham was portrayed as "a place which, while waiting for league football, has made itself moderately useful by hosting festivals of music, literature, horse racing, cricket and other pursuits of secondary interest" (Butler, 1999, p.45).

Several superlatives are also used within the reports that serve to give the impression of the quality of Cheltenham's festivals, Keating (2001) refers to the "world famed" literature festival. Adjectives such as "prestigious" (McGrath, 2001) and "showcase" (Fleetwood-Jones, 2001) are also commonplace when referring to one of Cheltenham's festivals. The position of the National Hunt Festival as the pinnacle of the jump racing world is also reinforced with Edmonson (2001b) referring to the festival as "the most important fixture in National Hunt Racing". There are also references which seek to demonstrate the importance of this festival by comparing it with established and widely recognised important events from other sports. For instance, the Gold Cup is referred to as "World Cup of National Hunt Racing" (Lansley, 2000)

### **5.7.2 Contrasts within Cheltenham's image: The old and the new**

The tension that exists within the newspaper reports of Cheltenham's festivals in relation to the town's image also exists within the news stories that are published in relation to the town. However, the way in which the images are used differs slightly from those contained within the reports on the festivals.

Colwell (2001) does a good job of summarising what could be termed as the 'traditional image' of Cheltenham when she describes the town as, "a beautiful spa town with elegant Regency architecture and tree-lined avenues. The main promenade, which begins in Montpellier and leads down to the High Street, is lined with chestnut trees and has a cosmopolitan feel". Horsnell (2000, p.36) alludes that this 'traditional' image for the town is one that exists within the consciousness of his readers, as he refers to the town as being "generally thought of as a fine, staid sort of place where nothing dramatic happens". In a similar way to the reports on Cheltenham's festivals a number of adjectives are used to describe the town which fit in with the 'traditional image', such as "genteel" (Clark, 1999), "quiet" (McSmith and Wazir, 1999, p.2) and "attractive" (Weaver, 2001).

The 'traditional' image of Cheltenham is also used by journalists as a means of introducing stories about Cheltenham. The 'traditional' image is used as an 'angle' that is exploited by journalists to the effect that the events that they are describing don't fit with what they see as the accepted image of the town. For instance, when referring to the promotion of Cheltenham Town Football Club to the Football League, Keating (1999) notes that "Cheltenham plays host to a brand new fiesta - and an unlikely one, somehow, for a place that fancies itself as a haughtily regal watering hole".

Many similar sentiments were also expressed following the tragic death of Andrew Pennington, the assistant to the local Liberal Democrat MP who was killed by a local man wielding a Samurai sword during a drop-in session at the MP's office. Mills (2000) claims that, "Cheltenham, with its Georgian facades and tweed-suited shoppers, seems an unlikely place for a murder". In a report from the scene of the murder De Bruxelles (2000, p.1) notes that, "despite the town's reputation as home of retired colonels and well-bred young ladies, gangs of louts hung around outside a run down kebab shop kicking tin cans around".

Another story in relation to Cheltenham that made the national press involved the author Joanna Trollope who in an interview with the Radio Times, was critical of some aspects of the Cotswolds generally and Cheltenham in particular. This interview was picked up on by many of the national newspapers, with the same phrase being used in relation to Cheltenham in each of the reports, in that "Cheltenham, renowned as being very upmarket, has an appalling drugs record" (Cole, 2000; Savill, 2000; Prasad, 2000).



Cheltenham's association with the National Hunt Festival is also reinforced, with the town being referred to as, "the world famous home of National Hunt Racing" (McGrath, 2001). Another reference to Cheltenham Town Football Club's promotion notes that, Cheltenham's "crowd [is] more synonymous with racing form than football success" (Haylett, 1999). The racing metaphors also continue in relation to the football team itself, as "Cheltenham made a decent start at reminding the world that the town also possess a thoroughbred football team" (Lansley, 2000).

The aspect of the image of Cheltenham that breaks away from the 'traditional' image relating to the hedonistic atmosphere of the National Hunt Festival and the influx of Irish visitors is also well documented in newspaper reports in the news sections of the selected newspapers. Many of these reports relate to the cancellation of the 2001 festival due to foot and mouth disease being present on a local farm. Whilst the reports themselves are concerned with one of Cheltenham's festivals outside of the selected time period for study, many of the reports that were published following the cancellation of the festival were contained within the main news sections, as opposed to the dedicated sports section of the newspaper. For example, a report from Cheltenham on the day after the Gold Cup had been scheduled to take place comments that in "a room which was formerly the foremost partying arena in all Cheltenham there was, in the cold light of a Gloucestershire morning, just piles of chairs in a banqueting suite where once you could expect piles of barely shifting bodies" Edmonson (2001).

The cancellation of the festival lead to a number of lamentations by journalists, references to good times and anecdotes from festivals past. Nowhere is this exemplified to better effect than in an article by White (2001) who notes that,

This week was scheduled to be the Irish invasion, the three-day period when the west country goes green. At least 25,000 Irish people head over every year to the Cheltenham festival race meeting. They come to watch their horses clean up, to rub shoulders with the retired colonels in elegant pubs, to fill every available guest house between Bristol and Birmingham. And to drink.

Cheltenham racecourse during festival week is the most extraordinary sight: the way the horses run at you from out of the hills, the way the grandstands arc round the finishing line and the way tens of thousands of people get simultaneously plastered without rancour or threat. Not even

the Munich beer festival offers such a concentration of good time drinking.

Led by the Irish, celebrating the happy coincidence of St Patrick's Day and a race meeting, everyone is at it. A couple of years ago, I went there with a friend who was making his first outing after joining the 10-step alcoholics anonymous programme.

As unwise moves go, this was up there with the recovering kleptomaniac taking a trip to Harrods. He had just jumped aboard the wagon and here he was surrounded by thousands of inebriates. It was like being shown a negative of a snapshot of his drinking life. Terrified of the vision, he was off home before the first race

The contrasts between the 'traditional' and the 'new' image for Cheltenham are highlighted in the number of articles that were published in relation to the local council's decision to use the face of Naomijo Hughes, who has piercings in her tongue, chin, nose, lips and eyebrow, in a poster campaign designed to encourage young people to use their votes in the forthcoming local elections. Several National newspapers picked up on this story, with the resultant articles all following a similar line. The articles all opened with a reference to the traditional image of Cheltenham, for instance, "the image of Cheltenham as a staid spa town catering for the autumn years of retired gentlefolk is undergoing a radical overhaul" (O'Neil, 1999, p.8). Also, "in a radical transformation, the genteel Regency spa town of Cheltenham has cast off its Laura Ashley image in favour of body-piercing" (Judd, 1999). Judd also refers to this as "a new image for the town" and that "Cheltenham, is no longer a place where retired colonels take tea but a happening town where a tattoo is de rigueur".

The articles then go on to describe Miss Hughes before introducing key local figures to give their opinion on the situation. All of the articles quote, John Todman, who, at the time, was leader of Cheltenham Borough Council and whilst the quotes differ slightly depending on which newspaper you read, the overall message is the same and is typified by the quotation used by O'Neill (1999, p.8) in that "Miss Hughes is in keeping with the new forward looking Cheltenham ... I think the image of Cheltenham as a town full of retired Indian Army colonels is one that no longer exists. They did a lot for Cheltenham in their time but things have moved on and you only have to come into town in the evenings to see what a young and lively place it is".

Each of the articles then introduces other significant local people who disagree with this 'new' image for the town. The popular author, Jilly Cooper, who lives in the nearby

village of Bisley, is quoted as saying "It is a death wish for the town. It is like Helen of Troy suddenly covering herself in body piercing she didn't need it and neither does Cheltenham. Cheltenham is a beautiful, ravishing place. The young pour into Cheltenham looking incredibly glamorous, the flowers are wonderful and the town is just beautiful. This is a ridiculous image that won't appeal to anyone. It is an extraordinary thing to do" (De Bruxelles, 1999). The headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College is quoted as saying "we have 850 lively young girls from all parts of the world and I like to think we contribute to the town's vitality. But I have to say that we don't go in for piercing here" (O'Neill, 1999, p.8).

Local celebrities and dignitaries are also used to offer their opinions on Cheltenham's image after Julia Pargetter (a character in Radio 4's *The Archers*) described Cheltenham as a "dreary market town". In response, the articles begin by describing the 'traditional' image of Cheltenham typified by (O'Neill, 1998) describing it as "the Cotswolds spa town of Cheltenham, which boasts among its attractions the Gold Cup, the GCHQ spy centre and Europe's largest boarding school for girls". The 'new' image for Cheltenham is offered within quotations given by the town's local Liberal Democrat MP, who claims that "Cheltenham is a town of Regency splendour, we have wonderful festivals here; the National Hunt festival is world famous, the literature festival has just ended and we've just held our first international jazz festival ... that all makes for a very mixed town and community. It is certainly not at all dreary" (cited in O'Neil, 1998).

## **5.8 The significance of the newspaper coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals**

Each of the key constructs that emerge from the depiction of Cheltenham and its festivals are positive in nature and tend to create an image of the town that could, potentially, be attractive to new investors, residents and tourists. The main feature that is present in both the reports on festivals and on Cheltenham generally seeks to portray an image of 'quality' for the town. This quality is inferred with reference not only to the festivals themselves, but also the festival's participants. This quality image gives the reader the impression that Cheltenham's festivals are of a significantly high stature to be a draw to the biggest names in their particular fields to partake in the festival and also to draw festival audiences from celebrities and other prominent figures. This association with the 'best' in their particular field and the endorsement of major celebrities, be they

participants or members of the audience, only seeks to highlight and reinforce Cheltenham's quality image.

There is also a high degree of similarity between the key constructs used in the depiction of Cheltenham in the reports relating to its festivals and the news reports that are published. This similarity serves to both reinforce and maintain the 'traditional' image that Cheltenham has. Even when the traditional image is used as the basis for a story for something that a journalist, or maybe even the reader, wouldn't expect to happen in Cheltenham the images that are used in relation to the town are primarily positive. On the occasions that a more negative side of Cheltenham is portrayed the town is always robustly defended by key figures and spokespeople within the article. Therefore, if there is a bias within the reporting on Cheltenham it is one that has a positive slant. Moreover, new images that challenge Cheltenham's traditional image may be of benefit to the town as these images may be appealing to a different subsection of the population who may not be attracted by the staid, traditional image that the town has.

The synchronicity of the images contained within the reports on Cheltenham and its festivals, be it intentional or not on the part of journalists, assists in the stereotyping of Cheltenham as a town that possesses a 'quality' image that is associated with many festivals, a rural location and also of a town with conservative image that is being challenged by 'modern' society. This synchronicity of image, however, appears to be a starting point for journalists to produce a news story in relation to the town. In short, items that may not be deemed to be worthy of national news coverage in other locations, receive coverage if they take place in Cheltenham and do not conform to the image of the town that journalists believe that their customers have of Cheltenham. The use of phrases such as 'as readers will know....' refers to, and calls upon, this stereotypical image. However, this 'stereotyped image' is, it could be argued, one that is constructed via the practices of the media and therefore the media can be seen to be both creating an image and also challenging and perhaps modifying it through subsequent articles.

The synchronicity of the images of Cheltenham contained within the media coverage of the town and its festivals may go some way to indicate that there is a hierarchy of importance within the images that are portrayed. For instance, many of the articles

covering the festival and the town in general draw heavily from the 'traditional' image of the town that is based upon its perceived socio-cultural characteristics. This image, then, may be the most important one that is associated with the town as it pervades all of the coverage that the town receives. The traditional image is also often contained within the opening paragraphs of the articles and therefore indicates that this image may be the one that is most commonly associated with the town, both by the journalists responsible for the production of news stories and also their perceived audience.

The analysis of the newspaper coverage in isolation, however, cannot explain the relationship that exists between Cheltenham's traditional image and the contradictions that are associated with a new or innovative image for the town. Questions are also raised as to the extent to which the images of the town are transferred to external audiences and the importance that is attached to both the media coverage generally and the coverage of festivals specifically in the construction of image. It may be that the traditional image is one that persists and over-rides the new or innovative images that are contained within the media coverage that may be seen as ephemeral and less attached to the town.

It should be noted, however, that not all of the categories that were identified in relation to the image of Cheltenham were found in the newspaper reports for all of the festivals. Therefore, it is only with an amalgamated view of all the festival reports can a composite view of the transmission of Cheltenham's image via the newspaper reports of festivals be achieved.

The coverage that the festivals receive also seeks to differentiate between Cheltenham's festivals and other festivals in alternative locations. With Cheltenham's festivals constantly being referred to as the oldest, being unique or at the pinnacle of endeavour in their field, the festivals are separated and differentiated in what is becoming an increasingly crowded festival marketplace.

While Cheltenham hosts many differing festivals, both the nature and extent of coverage appear heavily weighted toward the National Hunt Festival. This festival attracted by far the highest amount of coverage and also was an important conceptual category in the images of Cheltenham that were contained within the reports of Cheltenham's other festivals. Cheltenham's multi-festival approach may create a

diversity that may seek to dilute this domination of one festival to some extent, as there may be a danger of Cheltenham being associated with only one event, or type of event, in a similar way to Epsom, Aintree, Ascot or Henley on Thames.

The analysis of the images contained within the coverage of Cheltenham generally and its festivals and events indicates that the constructs used are different from those found in more conventional promotional campaigns. It has been argued that promotional packages tend to be rarely original and draw upon a very limited range of themes and motifs (Hall, 1998a). Holcomb (1994) for example, identifies six major themes that form the basis of most conventional promotional campaigns adopted in North American cities:

- Centrality (e.g. 'Put your business in the centre of the world' – Atlanta)
- Gateways (e.g. 'Your gateway to Mexico' – Brownsville, Texas)
- The future (e.g. New Brunswick tomorrow)
- Cheap location costs (e.g. 'Consider the less taxing environment' – Orlando)
- Labour quality (e.g. 'Emporo: Working for you')
- High quality of life (e.g. 'Number one liveable city' – Pittsburgh).

Whilst the images of Cheltenham that are portrayed within the media coverage of the town and its festivals also draws upon a similarly limited number of key components, these components are very different from those contained within the glossy brochures of traditional place promotion campaigns. The images of Cheltenham contained within its media coverage may also be more effective as they are not part of an overt advertising campaign and are grounded within the socio-cultural characteristics of the town and not part of a 'managed' image produced by an advertising agency or marketing department. The difference of the image may also lead to increased 'believability' from recipients as they are not reading the same claims of centrality, location costs and labour costs that they may have heard applied to so many places before. The general cohesiveness of the images of the town that are portrayed may also go some way to instilling an image of the town in recipient's minds as it may be easier to accept an image that is generally cohesive and un-fragmented than one that is multifaceted and constantly shifting and repositioning.

The aspects of tradition that are associated with Cheltenham are also very different to those contained within conventional promotional campaigns. Tradition, and history in general, is something that is rarely a part of conventional campaigns, and where it does appear it is generally a sanitised version of the past free from contention and images of industry and poor working conditions (Hall, 1998a). In contrast, the images of Cheltenham contained within its media coverage are radically different in that they find their base in the socio-cultural development of the town dating back to the early nineteenth century. Cheltenham may be fortunate, however, in that it was largely spared the mass development of manufacturing during the industrial revolution, but an image that draws so heavily from a sense of tradition is rare in terms of place marketing.

## **5.9 Summary**

Cheltenham's festivals appear to be an excellent mechanism for the creation and maintenance of positive images of place. Their coverage in the media positions Cheltenham in the spotlight to a far greater extent than it would receive without coverage of its festivals. The analysis of the coverage of Cheltenham suggests a complex and contrasting image that is constructed through the media. This coverage, however, is generally complimentary to the town and creates an image of quality that permeates the boundaries of individual festivals and is also contained within the reports of news events within the town. Whilst there does seem to be a tension between the stereotyped traditional image of Cheltenham as a home for retired colonels, conservatism and refined young ladies and that of a 'modern' town and the revelry associated with the National Hunt Festival, these images only serve to highlight Cheltenham's cosmopolitan nature.

However, whilst the coverage of Cheltenham's festivals helps to generate a great deal of media attention that could help to create a strong positive image for the town, the analysis of the coverage on its own gives no indication of the extent to which these images and associations are transferred to the way in which the town is perceived by key economic actors. Also, the differentiation between the images of Cheltenham and the images of Cheltenham's festivals may, however, be purely theoretical, as the recipients of these images may not create this distinction. Moreover, as was identified within chapter two, much of the research into place marketing, particularly amongst practitioners adopting a semiotic approach, has failed to assess the extent to which the recipients of place marketing interact with the images of place that they receive and the

subsequent images that they create. The neglect of this issue has serious ramifications for the understanding of place marketing and its effectiveness in producing positive economic benefits and chapter six is aimed at correcting these oversights.



## **Chapter Six: Interview results**

This chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of place marketing by analysing the images of place that Cheltenham's business community have and what relevance to economic development they believe this image has. Central to this is an identification of the key constructs that are used in the construction of images of place and the examination of the individual impacts that images of place have on a locality.

Chapter two established that whilst place marketing is an oft adopted policy by various locations seeking to attract footloose industries, little, if anything, is known about the way in which the images of place that are transmitted by place marketing strategies are a key component in securing economic development. One facet of place marketing is the holding of high profile festivals that can attract media attention that can disseminate images of place to a much wider audience than glossy brochures and advertisements in target journals which are the traditional methods of place marketing. Therefore, the use of festivals as a part of place marketing and the transmission of place images via the media have become central elements of the way in which places compete with each other both to retain their existing businesses and to attract entrepreneurs and businesses from other locations. The impacts that these policies have on their host location, however, is purely speculative and whilst there appears to be a general consensus both within the bodies responsible for local economic development initiatives and within the academic literature on place promotion, there is little evidence to suggest that this is the case.

This chapter, therefore, aims to contribute to the understanding of place marketing in two inter-related areas. Firstly, by identifying the images of place held by one of the intended recipients of place marketing policies, namely the business community, and examining the extent to which they believe that the media, Cheltenham's festivals and the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals are important mechanisms in the construction of images of place. By revealing the images of Cheltenham that they hold and the mechanisms that they believe are important in its construction, this chapter aims to answer some of the questions that have been raised in relation to place promotion. Secondly, having identified the key constructs of the images of Cheltenham held by the business community the relevance of images of place to local economic development is examined. By integrating the images of place held, the mechanisms responsible for

image construction and the impacts that place image can have on economic development, this chapter aims to make a significant contribution to understanding how a group of key economic actors inter-react with images of place and how this inter-reaction can lead to impacts upon a host location.

## **6.1 Images of Cheltenham held by the business community**

The images of Cheltenham held by the business community are broadly similar to those identified within the newspaper coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals in chapter five. However, whereas there was a dialectic within the newspaper coverage of an image of Cheltenham that was split between the traditional and the innovative, the images that are held by the business community, although they can be categorized similarly, are conceptualised as differing along an internal and external axis. The external image can be generally defined as an image that someone might hold who had not been in regular contact with the town and was often identified before being contrasted to a more personal, or internal, view of the town. For the business community, Cheltenham's external image is broadly associated with the traditional image that was contained within the newspaper reports on Cheltenham and its festivals and events and is characterised by associations with the elderly, affluence and festivals. The town's internal image, by contrast, is perceived to be more vibrant and lively and is generally analogous to the new, innovative image that was contained within the newspaper reports.

### **6.1.1 Cheltenham's external image: Associations with the elderly**

One of the most frequently elicited components of Cheltenham's external image was its association with retired personnel from the East India Company. For instance, "*Cheltenham is a retired colonels type town*" (Informant: Bovis Homes). "*Now Cheltenham has an image, and if you were to say to people what it is, they would say that it is all curry and colonels*" (Informant: Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce). "*I think that the image of Cheltenham is of retired colonels and people like that*". (Informant: Chelsea Building Society).

It is not only the retiring ex-colonial military service personnel that are associated with Cheltenham, the town is also believed to have an external image of being populated "*by people with blue rinses*" (Informant: UCAS). Also, "*When one of our employees who came here from America several years ago tried to find out some information about*

Cheltenham before they arrived all he could find was a book called 'Cheltenham a place to retire to' and I think that is a very succinct way of summing up how people see Cheltenham as a sleepy place in the Cotswolds that people retire to" (Informant: Kraft Foods).

### **6.1.2 Cheltenham's external image: Associations with affluence**

Cheltenham's external image is also associated with a degree of affluence. Apparently, "people from outside Cheltenham all have the opinion that Cheltenham, Cotswolds etc. 'oh all very nice, very posh' When people know that you are moving to Cheltenham they think that you are going up in the world and that you have become posh. They think that it is like the country version of Kensington or Chelsea" (Informant: University of Gloucestershire). Cheltenham is also compared and contrasted to its near neighbour Gloucester in that,

*I would perceive Cheltenham's external image to be one of an affluent middle class, somewhat elitist and of an artistic culture. It does not have the ethnic qualities of Gloucester which itself gives the two towns a very different image. I have always thought it interesting how the two areas are so close yet so far apart. I am sure that this is one reason for Cheltenham's elitist image* (Informant: Cheltenham Film Studios).

### **6.1.3 Cheltenham's external image: Association with festivals**

The external image of Cheltenham is also associated with a number of high profile festivals as "There is a perception that it is an event town, it is the kind of place that you go to for a particular reason" (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse). "There are two things synonymous with Cheltenham, the Georgian type genteel image, secondly the races" (Informant: Marlborough Stirling). Some informants also believed that "The first thing that people associate with Cheltenham is the racecourse and what people associate with the racecourse is money, green wellies and people who live in the countryside" (Informant: Zurich Insurance).

### **6.1.4 Cheltenham's internal image**

Having identified the components of Cheltenham's image that the business community believe are held by people who are not directly connected to the town, many of the informants went on to critique what they see as a 'stereotypical' image of the town. For instance,

*as you get to know Cheltenham you realise that it is very cosmopolitan, very young, very lively, very exciting, a bit like a chameleon it has a multi-faceted areas. It is a different place at night to what it is in the daytime. Cheltenham is all things to all people, it is exciting for the club goers, it is very restful to walk though the parks as a pensioner and for a 32 year old yuppie walking up the Promenade going in Monsoon and Jigsaw it is equally exciting"* (Informant: Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce).

Other informants also commented on the change in the way they perceive Cheltenham by day and by night as "*the night time economy of Cheltenham is at odds with its traditionally perceived image*" (informant: Bovis Homes).

The difference between the internal and external image is also contrasted between the image of Cheltenham that a businesses customers may have and the images of the people that work there. For instance, the

*externally perceived image of Cheltenham is one of a fairly posh Cotswold town and that is the one that our customers, particularly, the US, France etc. will have. My image of Cheltenham, as a bit more of an insiders view, is a relatively young, actually vibrant town. If you are in there, there are lots of professionals, doctors, lawyers, etc. I think it is like a mini-London so to speak* (Informant: Smiths Industries).

Other informants also identified their internal image of Cheltenham as being one associated with highly qualified professionals, but this also serves to highlight the discrepancies between the internal and external image, as the image of Cheltenham,

*isn't retired colonels, we can finally lay that one to rest, but beyond a 50 mile limit it would be regency, retired colonels, horse racing, education and GCHQ, not really a business image. Inside a 50 mile limit, it is more keeping with an accountant, solicitor, up market shopping, strong up market image, which works well within its hinterland but doesn't cut much ice beyond that* (Informant: Gloucestershire Development Agency).

The difference between the external and internal image of Cheltenham is delineated not only by reference to the spatial proximity to Cheltenham, but also by the passage of time as,

*twenty five years ago it sort of had the image of retired colonels and it was where people came to retire ... [this] old image of Cheltenham I think has entirely died out, if you were a 19 year old now you wouldn't even be aware*

*of that image. But Cheltenham now has a very young, vibrant image and places like Eastbourne and Hastings are now places that are associated more with the retirement population and this image is one that Cheltenham is best rid of* (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).

#### **6.1.5 Research into Cheltenham's image by the business community**

Cheltenham's image was something that appeared to be of direct interest to the business community and two of the informants indicated that they had conducted independent research into the way that Cheltenham was perceived by different groups of people. The images that were contained within this additional research are broadly similar to those expressed by the business community and those contained within the newspaper coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals. For instance,

*we did focus groups for this ... the traditionally perceived image that even 18 year old students were coming up with was; rural, rich and middle class, people see it as the epitome of white middle class middle England ... Older people thought mainly of regency or Cotswolds and younger people mainly of nightlife and the races* (Informant: University of Gloucestershire).

The second piece of research was a little more subjective as respondents were asked "*if Cheltenham was a lady describe her age, dress style and lifestyle. People said that she was 45-50, Margaret Thatcher with a handbag, mind you, younger people often said that she was 18-25, a raver in a PVC plastic mac. One Gentleman said she was a lady by day and a whore by night*" (Informant: Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce).

#### **6.1.6 Summary: Images of Cheltenham held by the business community**

The construction of an image of Cheltenham by the business community delineated along an internal-external axis seems to indicate that there is a belief that people who do not have regular, or direct experience of the town construct an image that largely corresponds to the traditional image of the town. The traditional image of Cheltenham that was identified within the media coverage that portrays Cheltenham as the home of retired colonels, affluent residents and the home of various festivals is the image that the business community believe is held by its suppliers, customers and potential employees. These images are largely associated with affluence, a key construct of Cheltenham's traditional image, in that they draw heavily upon the retirement of the upper echelons of military personnel, the countryside and high profile cultural and sporting festivals.

The business community seem to believe that it is the only the young and those with direct exposure to Cheltenham that have a new image of Cheltenham as a vibrant, cosmopolitan town which is generally comparable to the new, innovative image contained within the media coverage. However, a key component in the construction of this 'new' image would seem to be directly related to Cheltenham's night time economy, something that was not identified within the media coverage, as this seems to be viewed as the antithesis of Cheltenham's traditional image of being conservative and affluent.

The elements of the new or innovative nature of Cheltenham's image, which are largely associated with Cheltenham's festivals, are only introduced when informants seek to counter some of the inaccuracies that they see in the town's traditional image. This delineation of image may indicate that Cheltenham's festivals are just an ephemeral gloss whilst the old traditional image endures. This, in turn, raises questions into the effectiveness of image modifying initiatives, such as place marketing, which seek to change people's perception of place. Whilst, Cheltenham's traditional image does not have the negative connotations associated with heavy industry in the way that some of the locations that have used place marketing as a mechanism to assist in changing people's images (Kearns and Philo, 1993; Ward, 1998; Bradley *et al*, 2002), its traditional image seems to be resistant to change.

Cheltenham's image, however, would appear to be something which is of direct concern to the business community as they have instigated their own research into this area to identify the constructs that people associate with the town. The results from these studies are generally comparable with the images of Cheltenham that are contained within the media coverage relating to the town and its festivals and also the external images of Cheltenham that the business community believe people have. There is some evidence, however, that younger people may be less aware of Cheltenham's traditional image and their image may be more related to the new, innovative image that was found within the media coverage.

## **6.2 The importance of the media in constructing an image for Cheltenham**

There was a unanimous belief within Cheltenham's business community that the media was one of the principal mechanisms in the construction of images of Cheltenham by external audiences. For example, "*the power of the media to create an image is very important and the media take this image to a much wider audience*" (Informant: Chelsea Building Society). Images of Cheltenham are believed to be transmitted through the media via the use of a limited number of stereotypes which serve to re-enforce the traditional image of the town. These images, it is believed, are contained within references to the town within drama programs and also coverage of news stories that take place within the town.

### **6.2.1 The use of stereotypes in the media to construct an image of Cheltenham**

There was a strong belief amongst the business community that Cheltenham's traditional image was firmly rooted in a limited number of well-defined stereotypes that are referred to when describing events within the town as,

*The national media are primarily concerned with images and stereotypes and if they can describe a place by reference to a small number of claimed attributes, and often it is the media that give a place these attributes, rather than anything that actually exists it suits their purposes and often forms the basis of the stories that they write, and this is definitely true of Cheltenham. For instance, when they often talk about drugs in Cheltenham they always start with something about 'the nice Cotswold town' (Informant: GCHQ).*

A crucial point of concern with these stereotyped images was the dominance of London within the national media and how it is often easier for those working within the media to refer to established stereotypes when referring to a location as,

*the tabloid press is very London centred, London journalists if asked to come to Cheltenham for anything else but racing would expect to see little old ladies with pearls, and would write a quaint, quirky, jokey story. Those with longer memories expect it to be populated with bigoted racists who threw out a black Tory candidate (Informant: Gloucestershire Development Agency).*

*It is always easier for journalists to resort to stereotypes isn't it and if you have a 5 second part of an interview you will slot in a stereotype just as that*

*guy did yesterday on channel 4 [who, it is alleged, referred to Cheltenham as being a glorified old folks home], it may be a bit of a joke, but these things can be very difficult to change (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

It is not only the constructs of Cheltenham's image, such as it being a genteel spa town that is the home to retired colonels, that are frequently referred to within the media coverage of the town, but it is also believed that the pictorial representations that are used are also drawn from a limited pool of resources.

*How it perpetuates this image if you like is like every other town that you see, especially in the mass media, that if you see Cheltenham on the television you'll always virtually see a similar shot of the promenade that looks nice. There was a holiday program on TV 2 or 3 weeks back with a couple staying at what used to be the Savoy Hotel at the top of Montpellier and they were exploring the delights of Cheltenham, well apart from Montpellier, Montpellier Mews and the Promenade from about 16 different directions they didn't actually show anything else of Cheltenham (Informant: Marlborough Stirling).*

### **6.2.2 Constructing an image of Cheltenham through television dramas**

The use of stereotypical images in order to convey an image of Cheltenham to external audiences are also to be found within several popular dramatizations on television.

Generally,

*the way that Cheltenham appears in a TV programme is a key way that [the image] comes across. There aren't many TV programs that are set in Cheltenham but there are an awful lot of TV programs that make reference to people coming from Cheltenham. Whenever you have a reference to Cheltenham in a TV program it actually has a sort of snooty image. It makes it seem as if it is the kind of place that real people don't live. This is also important to the overseas viewers, particularly in America, as their overall view of Britain is controlled by high profile TV programs, i.e. good quality BBC and ITV dramas that get shown in the US. Cheltenham is seen as a kind of miniature of their view of Britain (Informant: Smiths Industries).*

Specific references were also made to individual television programs, such as the popular Channel 4 'soap' Hollyoaks, as there is character in the program that,

*comes from Cheltenham [she is] blonde, beautiful, very sexy and she portrays the view that she comes from Cheltenham in the program. She is very wealthy, she dresses the way that you would expect somebody from Cheltenham to dress, she portrays herself as very well spoken and I think that she went to Cheltenham ladies college (Informant: University of Gloucestershire).*



### 6.2.3 Cheltenham's traditional image as the foundation of a news story

Cheltenham's image, although containing many stereotypes, is different from many locations that have attempted to use place marketing techniques to address problematic images such as associations with industry, as the stereotyped images that are associated with Cheltenham are, generally, positive. This strong positive image, however, is believed to act as the basis for a number of stories that attract media attention. "*With all respect to Bolton and Blackburn, who wants to be Bolton or Blackburn. We have an elitist image, and if you stick your head above the parapet you are going to get shot at*" (Informant: Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce). It is believed that,

*The media keep trying to crack a story [as it is] part of the press mentality to knock something. You can get an idea of the image that they are trying to knock in the first few sentences of the item. If you set yourself up with an image people are likely to take a shy at it, especially if something that happens is in direct contradiction to that image. Cheltenham has had a drug reputation for nearly 40 years, it surfaces from time to time, but it doesn't seem to stick, I don't know why* (Informant: Gloucester Development Agency).

*Cheltenham has a strong positive image, and the stories that have tried to knock it only come out because it has this strong image and perhaps come to light more in a place that has a good background and a good image because it is unusual. If these things were happening in Gloucester, as an example, perhaps it wouldn't get so much coverage as perhaps people would say 'oh well these things happen' but in Cheltenham it is seen as a nice quiet, friendly place full of old age pensioners and people would say 'oh what, drugs' it is a shock* (Informant: Messier Dowty).

A number of examples were given in relation to recent news stories that had received media attention in order to further illustrate this point.

*There was that story about the Samurai sword attack on Andrew Pennington, which I am sure that many people find completely at odds with their view of Cheltenham that someone could do something like that in a place like this. It was also funny to see Cheltenham portrayed as a haven for drugs and alcohol in that Japanese tour guide saying that you shouldn't go out at night, whilst there are places in Cheltenham that I wouldn't go to alone at night, things here are nothing in comparison from where I came from and I can't believe that people would have taken this story seriously as it is so at odds with Cheltenham's clean-cut image. I'm surprised that it didn't get really blown up as it really is completely at odds with the image, and it reflected The Times' view of Cheltenham: 'this is Cheltenham.. how stupid can this really be? It's not a drug haven, it can't be, it is our beloved country Cheltenham' People who know Cheltenham or have read about it*

*would have had a hard time in swallowing that” (Informant: Smiths Industries).*

Whilst there is a general recognition that a number of stories in relation to Cheltenham that are transmitted via the media which conflict with the town’s traditional image, there is also a belief that Cheltenham’s image is of a sufficient quality, that its image remains largely untarnished. For instance,

*Cheltenham’s image has been durable over time and has survived the drugs, Andrew Pennington and Paul Taylor stories and the media although reporting these stories has at the same time been the main instigator and maintainer of the traditional image of the town (Informant: GCHQ).*

*[Cheltenham has] such a strong image over all, but it would take an awful lot of these sort of things to generally change people’s views that this is not such a good place (Informant: Messier Dowty).*

#### **6.2.4 Summary: The media and construction of images of place**

The media’s increasing incorporation in people’s everyday lives is seen as being one of the principal mechanisms for the construction of images of place by people that are external to the town. As noted previously, it is believed that the images held by external audiences are believed to be those identified as the traditional image of Cheltenham. It is believed that the endurance of the town’s traditional image can be explained, in part, by the way in which the town is covered in the media.

The use of stereotypes, both in terms of the manifest content and the pictorial representations of the town, by the media when making reference to Cheltenham are seen to be one of the principal reasons for the endurance of the town’s traditional image. Stereotypes draw upon a strictly limited amount of information (Avraham, 1993), and when applied to the transmission of images of place, it involves only presenting, or representing, the location from only one certain point of view or containing extracts that are only representative of a small selection of the social, cultural or aesthetic nature of place (Holcomb, 1993; Sadler, 1993; Kotler *et al* 1999). In this case, it is believed that the stereotypes which, by their very nature, only contain limited representations of place, are being used to portray Cheltenham and these stereotypes draw heavily upon the traditional image of the town and therefore serve to re-enforce this image instead of drawing upon images of the town which may be contradictory to this established image.

It is believed that this prevalence of stereotypes can be explained by reference to Cheltenham's proximity to the foundations of the United Kingdom's media and the mass audience reach of television programs. It is alleged that many of the stereotypes continue to exist as Cheltenham is not located sufficiently close to London for it to be frequented regularly by what is perceived as a London-centred media. Therefore, in much the same way as it was believed that people external to Cheltenham construct different images of place from those who have regular contact with the town, the continuing use of stereotypes relating to Cheltenham's traditional image is believed to exist as those responsible for the production of images in the media are not people who have paid regular visits to Cheltenham. The use of portrayals or references to the town in television programs is also believed to play an important part in the construction of images of the town for external audiences. Whilst these representations draw upon the same stereotypical constructs, it is believed that if they can draw upon constructs that are generally recognised as being readily associated with a place by their target audience then that representation will be used in making reference to a specific locality.

Although there appears to be a conceptual disagreement with the way in which Cheltenham is portrayed in the media, there also appears to be a recognition that the image of Cheltenham that is used as a stereotype for the town is one that could be associated with certain qualities. It is also believed that it is these perceived qualities that form the basis of many of the stories relating to Cheltenham that appear in the media. Moreover, this quality, traditional image is seen as one that is sufficiently strong and ingrained in the public's consciousness that it has been able to resist some of the news stories which appear to be in direct contradiction to the established image that the town has. Paradoxically, then, whilst the image of the town that is constructed through the media is not one that is agreed with by the business community, it is an image that contains elements of quality and is one that has prevented the town from becoming associated with the murder, drug abuse and children scavenging in bins which have all been elements in recent news stories in Cheltenham (de Bruxelles, 1999(b); Cole, 2000; Prasad, 2000).

### 6.3 The importance of Cheltenham's festivals in constructing an image for the town

An integral part of Cheltenham's image is its association with a number of festivals as, "Cheltenham's festivals are important for creating and maintaining the popularly perceived image of the town" (Informant: GCHQ). "The festivals and events are undoubtedly a good thing for the town and its image and they are a good thing to perpetuate" (Informant: Marlborough Stirling). "The festivals brand Cheltenham, the literary festival the music festival etc. they help this elitist image that people buy in to" (Informant: Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce). "I am a strong believer that quality counts, if the town is associated with quality events there will be a spin-off from that" (Informant: Gloucester Development Agency).

The principal spin-off from Cheltenham's hosting of festivals is believed to be the symbiotic relationship that they have with the image of Cheltenham.

*As we have, music, poetry, cricket and literature festivals I am sure it does add up to the fact that it gives people a good image of the place that there are all these cultural and other types of things going on. Plus as there are so many of them it is not only attracting people to live here but it is also attracting visitors all the time. So that is constantly plugging away at 'come to Cheltenham it is a nice place' (Informant: Messier Dowty).*

*The literature festival is huge, if you look at the people that they have there it is probably one of the best ones anywhere in the world and we get involved by sponsoring an event there. Jazz festival – you see it as people sitting in a dark dinghy room smoking cigars and drinking red wine The whole thing contributes to Cheltenham appearing to be quite a posh place. The music festival, when you look at who appears there it is very high brow (Informant: University of Gloucestershire).*

*[Cheltenham's festivals] are absolutely vital to both the economic and social development of the town. Myerscough in the late 1980s claimed that the arts was the second most important driver or influence for companies relocating out of London, after proximity to the countryside. The Bath festivals capitalise on the tourists that come to Bath, but Bath would have its visitors whether or not it has its festivals. Cheltenham needs events/festivals to give Cheltenham a profile ... If you think of what other places have done, Birmingham has improved its image through culture and events, Bristol will get its act together sooner or later, it hasn't yet but it will. What would Stratford be it is didn't have what it has? Any town that is of any size is trying desperately to promote itself for direct tourism or profile to get businesses in and we can't or just let go as it is a very competitive business and we have to keep investing. (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).*

Festivals are therefore seen as not only being an integral part of Cheltenham's image, but also as a key component of the town's economic fortunes.

*The arts festivals have a relatively small direct impact, when you think of the numbers of people that come and spend money, whilst it is insignificant relative to the races with a real influx of people it isn't as big. The impact, I think, is much more of an indirect one, in the feel that they create (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).*

The number and type of Cheltenham's festivals, however, can also go some way to challenging what is seen as the traditional image of the town.

*[the amount of festivals] refers to my image of Cheltenham being like a mini-London. To a certain kind of person I think that it means a lot, we have a good mixture, we have the book festival, the open air music, but then we have other things like the cricket festival, but you also have the football team that are doing quite well which helps to bring a broad band of entertainments for people. People feel that Cheltenham is a place to be and that there are things there to do (Informant: Smiths Industries).*

*The fact that we have so many festivals such as the music, the literature the jazz festival, the cricket, the horse racing and we are soon to have a science festival helps to broaden the image. Anything that lasts more than a quarter of an hour here is billed as a festival! (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

### **6.3.1 The importance of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals**

Whilst it is generally recognised that Cheltenham's festivals play an important part in terms of creating and maintaining the image of the town and the associated economic development benefits, it is also recognised that the media play a crucial role in the dissemination of images of the festivals. "*Undoubtedly the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals plays an important role in maintaining the town's image*" (Informant: Krone UK Technique).

*The media coverage is important, the main broadsheet newspapers cover the literature festival and one of them sponsors it. Column inches are good news for reaching some sectors of the market, and I have no reason to believe that that it has done any harm, and it has almost certainly done a lot of good (Informant: Gloucester Development Agency).*

*the festival committee do a very good job of getting festival coverage in the media and I'm sure that 99% of the time that it is positive coverage in the*

*media and I am sure that it is all part of their strategy in putting these festivals on and getting the media coverage and getting positive media coverage is a big part of it in terms of advertising, but also the wider issue of showing that there are all these things happening in Cheltenham and what a good place it is (Informant: Messier Dowty).*

In part, the images of Cheltenham that are transmitted through the media coverage of its festivals are deemed to be especially important due to

*the media that cover it. For instance, would you see the Cheltenham festival of literature in The Daily Star? This is all stuff that is in The Times, The Telegraph, The Observer, The Independent, but it is that sort of image. People who read the broadsheets are considered to be of a certain class or standing and having that amount of coverage in these papers undoubtedly maintains Cheltenham's image. Even for the National Hunt Festival, the broadsheets put it in perspective of the town that it is in, whereas the tabloids just concentrate on the form and the racing gossip (Informant: University of Gloucestershire).*

There is some disagreement, however, as to whether the images that are contained within the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals serve to re-enforce the town's traditional image or they serve to challenge people's perception about the town. For instance,

*as the person who negotiated the sponsorship deal with The Independent then I would say it the media coverage is vital to the town. The difficulty is that we have gone in for media sponsorship, but the literature festival has been covered by The Telegraph and The Independent and has received huge, huge coverage and has promoted Cheltenham. It is almost at the point now that you can't avoid Cheltenham. But if you have a media sponsor the other papers don't bother covering it unless there is something sensational going on. Obviously, the national hunt has a massive press operation and they are talking about it on TV and radio from November onwards because of the preparatory race meetings. ... The tenor of the articles is that, I can just see the first paragraph 'you may think that Cheltenham is a stuffy old boring little town in the Cotswolds but it is not because there is this exciting thing going on.' And I do think that it may help to bring people in, especially to visit as they may say 'oh, that's interesting, I used to think that it was a old stuffy town' and therefore it can help to challenge people's perceptions about Cheltenham (Informant UCAS).*

*The [festival organisers] seem to be very good at getting coverage, especially the major ones, less so the music festival. They get a good share of coverage and are guaranteed image creators. In order to get a national reputation you have to have a lot of coverage or else you are not going to get noticed. They also do a good job of keep moving forward and also*

*finding a new angle every year that they need to keep getting the coverage* (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).

*The festivals and events here do get a lot of media coverage but I think that they send out the wrong images about the town, and help to maintain an image that is not in keeping with modern Cheltenham. Cheltenham is now a lively cosmopolitan place with lots of really great things going on but the media still portray it with the old stuffy retired colonels image which really isn't a help to the businesses here* (Informant: Kraft Foods).

*There is a lot of hype and coverage of the literature festival in The Independent and this reinforces the image of Cheltenham. But some of the alternative things that are going on get very little national media coverage, but if these things could get more media coverage it would help to deconstruct people's images of Cheltenham. For example, the fringe festival, if people could see the different acts and the different people that are here and the different activities to that which are traditionally associated with Cheltenham it would have an effect on the perception of the town* (Informant: University of Gloucestershire).

### **6.3.2 Other important factors in the construction of Cheltenham's image**

Three additional factors were seen as important constructs for the maintenance and dissemination Cheltenham's image

- Cheltenham Town Football Club's promotion to the Football League
- Cheltenham's reputation as a centre of educational excellence
- Cheltenham's association with the royal family

The promotion of Cheltenham Town Football Club to the Football League at the end of the 1998-1999 season is seen to act as a mechanism that keeps Cheltenham in people's minds as, "*the fact that Cheltenham Town are now in the football league and that they are mentioned at least once every Saturday on the television and the radio help to put Cheltenham in the spot-light*" (Informant: UCAS). "*The elevation of Cheltenham Town to the football league creates a lot of publicity as it gets the name of Cheltenham on the map*" (Informant: Bovis Homes). "*The promotion of Cheltenham Town was really important due to the reading of the results every week. For instance who has ever heard of a few of the places if they didn't have football teams*" (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council). It is also believed that the team's promotion "*got a far higher profile than Rushden and Diamonds that are now doing the same thing because it is quirky for Cheltenham to have a league division football team. It is one of only four towns or cities*

*England that have a racecourse, a first class cricket ground and a Football League club*" (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).

Cheltenham also has a "*reputation as a centre of excellence for education with the boys and ladies college*" (Informant: University of Gloucestershire). Their reputation, it is believed, also extends beyond national boundaries as "*the boys college and ladies college is internationally renowned*" (Informant: Chelsea Building Society).

Cheltenham's image of an affluent society may, in part, be attributed to "*the fact that half the royal family have houses around here and they have a strong association with Cheltenham which helps the image*" (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse). Cheltenham is also seen as being "*synonymous with the royal set with many of them having houses in the Cotswolds. The association between the Queen Mother and the races no doubt adds to this view also*" (Informant: Smiths Industries).

### **6.3.3 Summary: The importance of Cheltenham's festivals and their media coverage in constructing images of place**

Cheltenham's festivals and the media coverage thereof is seen as an important part of the way in which images of the town are transmitted to external audiences. There is, however, a concern that the images contained within this coverage tend to re-enforce the traditional image of the town rather than expanding or updating the town's image. This, in part, is related to the holding of high profile cultural festivals of music, literature and jazz, which, when coupled with associations of educational excellence and links to the royal family, are seen to fit into the stereotypical image that is transmitted by the media of an affluent, upper-middle class town populated by retired colonels.

It is believed that festivals are something that have become synonymous with Cheltenham's image and that they help to brand the town. It is also recognised that Cheltenham's festivals are important in marketing the town to external audiences and they are an important part in the competition between places for economic development. As a result, Cheltenham's festivals are seen as a important mechanism for keeping the town in the public's eye and as a result this has positive economic benefits for the town. There is also a suggestion that the media coverage of the Cheltenham's festivals can go some way to counter the stereotyped image of the town and bring its image into line with what the business community see to be more representative of modern



Cheltenham. The selective nature of the festivals that receive media attention may go some way to explain this, as it is believed that if the coverage was extended to include some of the more 'peripheral' festivals the images of the town used may not draw so heavily on the stereotyped images.

The promotion of Cheltenham Town Football Club was mentioned by many of the informants as an example of the coverage of Cheltenham that was significantly different from that contained within the stereotyped, traditional image. The increasing media attention that football has received in the last decade, together with its centrality to many people's lives on Saturday afternoons was believed to be something which, potentially, could seek to deconstruct the images of Cheltenham that people currently have.

#### **6.4 Cheltenham's image, the media, festivals and impacts upon economic development**

The views expressed by the business community in relation to their images of Cheltenham and the components that they believe are important in the construction of the image highlight the importance of Cheltenham's festivals and the media coverage thereof. The images that are disseminated by the media via the coverage of Cheltenham's festivals draw upon, and contribute to, the construction of an image of Cheltenham that is consumed by external audiences. The testimony of the business community indicates that they are in little doubt that the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals serves to reinforce a strong positive image for Cheltenham (table 6-1).

<i>Selected quote</i>	<i>Informant</i>
“undoubtedly a good thing”	Marlborough Stirling
“absolutely vital to the economic and social development of the town	Cheltenham Borough Council
“I am sure that 99% of the time [the media coverage] is positive”	Messier-Dōwty
“Coverage in those papers undoubtedly maintains Cheltenham’s image”	University of Gloucestershire
“Undoubtedly, the media coverage of Cheltenham’s festivals plays an important part in maintaining the town’s image”	Krone UK Technique

Table 6-1 Selected quotes from the business community indicating the importance of the media coverage of Cheltenham’s festivals in creating and maintaining images of place

The importance of Cheltenham’s image to the business community is also reflected in their own research into how people perceive the town. This reflects the opinion that place image is seen as a key element in the economic success or failure of a location. The amount and nature of Cheltenham’s coverage in the media serves to constantly position Cheltenham in the media spotlight and to feed the positive image that the town has. The amount and coherence, in terms of type of images of the town that are disseminated, may also go some way to explain the resilience of Cheltenham’s image despite a number of stories that would appear to be contrary to the traditional image of the town. Moreover, the media coverage of Cheltenham’s festivals not only serves to maintain the traditional image of the town but is also seen as a mechanism by which these images can be challenged in favour of a more dynamic and innovative image for the town.

Whilst there are other factors that are also believed to be contributing factors to the external perception of Cheltenham, they were mentioned with much less frequency and in much less depth than the power of the media to construct and maintain an image for Cheltenham. The media, then, through its coverage of Cheltenham’s festivals is believed to play a crucial role in the creation and dissemination of images of the town

that are received by external audiences. It is through the creation of this image that the impacts of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals can be identified.

## **6.5 The impacts of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals**

Chapter Two established that whilst place marketing campaigns are largely heralded as producing positive economic benefits upon locations engaging in marketing activities, the nature of these impacts is largely unknown. It is also largely acknowledged that any negative impacts that place marketing campaigns have relate to sections of the community who do not directly share in the alleged benefits that place marketing can bring. In this instance, Cheltenham is marketed via the use of a multitude of festivals which attract local, national and international media coverage. This coverage, when combined with that the town receives generally, acts in the creation and maintenance of a strong positive image for Cheltenham and has both positive and negative impacts for the businesses that are currently located in Cheltenham.

### **6.5.1 The positive impacts of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals**

The strong positive image of Cheltenham that is conveyed through the mechanisms of the media in relation to Cheltenham and its festivals is believed to have positive impacts upon attracting highly qualified personnel and businesses, enhancing the retailing infrastructure and extending the image that the town has beyond the physical boundaries that are placed upon it by the local authority.

### **6.5.2 Positive impact: Staff recruitment**

Cheltenham's image is seen as being a direct attractant to highly qualified staff due to it being perceived as being a nice place to live with a high quality of life and its association with a multitude of festivals. The positive image that the town has is seen as a direct inducement to the attraction of highly qualified staff to the businesses that are located in the town.

*I think that Cheltenham's image is important for attracting people here ... There are a whole lot of factors with recruitment, you have to have the right salary to begin with, but on top of that you have to have a nice working environment. I think that it is important that Cheltenham is perceived to be a nice town to live in (Informant: Chelsea Building Society).*

*Cheltenham's image is definitely a big plus for recruitment purposes. As we recruit for both Swindon and Cheltenham we find it easier to get quality*

*recruits to work in Cheltenham than it is to get them to work in Swindon. Partly due to the reputations of the towns, and Cheltenham is seen as a nice place to live. Our main bulk of employees is in Swindon but we find it easier to recruit in Cheltenham. I think a lot of that is due to the fact that Eagle Star is seen as a good employer but also that Cheltenham is seen as a much nicer place to live and work. Whilst Swindon is a fantastic business centre, you wouldn't want to live there. Cheltenham is a far more friendly town, it doesn't have the drugs and violence that you hear about [in Swindon], all you hear about are the lovely shops and the Queens Hotel is gorgeous to have tea in (Informant: Zurich Insurance).*

A key element of Cheltenham's perceived image relates specifically to issues relating to quality of life as,

*quality of life issues are becoming increasingly more important, earnings are never a problem now, but it is an area's perceived quality of life that is becoming steadily more important in the recruitment mix ... Quality of life is a mix of issues bundled up together and includes things such as safety, house prices, public transport, road networks etc. and with the skills shortage it is becoming an employee market. People can be more fussy and want things that they couldn't have had before. It is now at the stage whereby people can say, you want me, but I don't necessarily want to work for you, so sell the area and the company to me and employers are having to change ... I know if we asked people if they wanted to work in either Swindon or Cheltenham that they would say Cheltenham and although the jobs would be exactly the same I assume that Cheltenham's quality of life and its perceived image would be a contributing factor in this (Informant: Zurich Insurance).*

*"As the age profile of our workforce is primarily based in its 20s and 30s schools and housing are important considerations and in terms of quality of life for young families Cheltenham scores highly" (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

*The quality of life here in Cheltenham is relatively easy to sell to people of all ages. People have more of a choice over where they live and how they commute to work than they would have in London. We sell Cheltenham as a place where you can have all the fun of a big city like London but none of the hassles that you would associate with commuting (Informant: Kraft Foods).*

A key ingredient within the high quality of life that Cheltenham can offer relates specifically to the many different festivals which are staged throughout the year as, *"We talk to our prospective candidates about the events that go on here to show them what a lively place Cheltenham is" (Informant: Kraft Foods). "I wouldn't move to a town*

*without a cinema, even if I don't go, it is the opportunity of culture as well as the culture itself" (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).*

*They [Cheltenham's festivals] are certainly something which I mention to potential candidates, senior people that I am interviewing if I am trying to sell the town people as somewhere to come and live and say that it is big enough town to have interesting things going on and there is always something on the horizon that is about to happen (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

*Top quality staff will always be drawn to London for a financial nature as well as the cultural benefits of living in our capital. However, for the person not wanting to live in London, Cheltenham is seen as an affluent and beautiful place to live, surrounded by countryside and some culture (Informant: Cheltenham Film Studio).*

There is also some evidence that the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals can have a direct bearing on the attraction of staff.

*The people who we are seeking to employ may be more influenced by media coverage of a location. The people that we would attract to Cheltenham and pay a relocation fee for would be senior managers. I would expect them to read the quality papers where most of the coverage of Cheltenham's events are. If we went out to head-hunters, where we get most of our senior staff from, I would expect the Cheltenham package to be far more enticing than other locations that we could offer and head-hunters always do a review of the town and I would expect that Cheltenham would get a good write up (Informant: Zurich Insurance).*

Cheltenham's image, then, is seen by many of the local businesses as a key element in their attempts to attract the best quality staff that they can. The evidence also suggests that issues relating to the perceived quality of life are believed to be destined to play an increasingly important role in the competition to secure the services of highly qualified or highly skilled personnel. Therefore, a location, such as Cheltenham, that is perceived to be able to offer a high quality of life can gain an advantage over other competing locations. An important facet of the quality of life argument is the profile that Cheltenham has achieved in relation to its hosting of a number of festivals of national and international repute as this is perceived to give the town a lively, cosmopolitan feel and therefore this becomes a key component not only of the way that Cheltenham markets itself, but also in the way that individual businesses within Cheltenham market themselves to potential employees.

### 6.5.3 Positive impacts: Business relocation

One of the principal objectives of many place marketing campaigns is its use as a mechanism to attract footloose industries to the area being promoted (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler *et al*, 1993; Gold and Ward, 1994). Moreover, whilst the attraction of industry is still often one of the main objectives of place marketing (Kotler *et al*, 1999), there is some evidence to suggest that place image is only one of a number of factors that are important in locational decision making processes and is rarely a key determinant in the decision to relocate (Young and Lever, 1997; Bradley *et al*, 2002). However, there was some evidence from within Cheltenham's business community that Cheltenham's strong positive image had been a key determining factor in the attraction of large national companies.

*[Cheltenham has] very definitely ... got that attractive image and it has a good combination of attractive image, attracting people to come and work and live there plus the old adage of being away from London. So you have a nice place to live which is cheaper than the south east and London. There is also lot of companies that have moved in to this area and I am sure that it is for that very reason. For instance, insurance companies, loads of them seem to be springing up over the last few years mainly because it is an attractive area to come to (Informant: Messier Dowty).*

*It is very important that Cheltenham has a profile, if you are running a business in Cheltenham and you are trying to be international with your business and you have an address in Piddletrenthide it doesn't mean anything to anyone, but an address in Cheltenham needs to mean something and why did Gulf Oil and Eagle Star move to Cheltenham (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).*

These beliefs that were expressed both by one of the agencies responsible for marketing Cheltenham and by one of its major industries, however, do not appear to be reciprocated within the type of firms that are referred to above when they were quizzed about the rationale for their location decision making.

*The main factor in our choice of Cheltenham as a location was the fact that Cheltenham used to boast about was that it had one of the highest densities of headquarter offices anywhere in the UK, so if you are looking to build a new HQ it looks like a good idea. Secondly, the work that our company does is based around support services for the financial services industry and Cheltenham, at the time, was a centre for financial services, so we were effectively surrounding ourselves with potential clients (Informant: Marlborough Stirling)*

*I actually met the founder recently, Stanley Thornes, who still lives in Cheltenham and he asked me the question that had he chosen a good location for the company because he thought it would be a good place to attract people to work as it is near the motorway and so on. ... When selecting the original location he thought about communications, transport and also the quality of life arguments that remain relevant today. (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

This study, in a similar manner to previous studies, has revealed that there is little evidence to suggest that place image itself is an important factor in the decision making process. Although Cheltenham's image does appear to be associated with elements of quality, it is suggested that this is only one amongst a range of factors that businesses take into account when considering a location for either a new business or for a new branch plant or subsidiary. It is possible to suggest, therefore, that some of the previous studies in relation to place marketing have overstated the importance of place image and that it needs to be placed into the context of a number of different attributes (transportation, available workforce and quality of life issues, for example) that are taken into consideration.

#### **6.5.4 Positive impacts: Retailing infrastructure**

It is believed that Cheltenham's retailing infrastructure is one of the primary beneficiaries of the strong image that Cheltenham has. However, this impact is not in reference to the general high street retailing provision, but in the more exclusive speciality shopping areas that exist on the fringes of the town centre as,

*Cheltenham cannot support the Promenade, Cheltenham is really lucky, it has nice shops on the promenade, but it would not have those shops if it was just local people buying, therefore it has to bring people in (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).*

*The main impact on Cheltenham's economy by its images is definitely in the retail sector as people often say 'oh, aren't these nice shops, we don't get shops like this everywhere'. The price is high, sell it cheap retailer just wouldn't fit in. There is a standard that must be maintained, although this standard may be subliminal (Informant: Marlborough Stirling).*

*Cheltenham cannot maintain its retail infrastructure based on its current population. If you look at Cheltenham as a town it has a retailing infrastructure greater than its base population can maintain. The image of Cheltenham is important for getting people to come to the town, it is what I*

*call the brand. For instance, if you are marketing Chanel perfume the last thing you would want to do is to make it cheap even though you could make it cheap. You make it deliberately expensive and people buy that elitism (Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce).*

The nature of the relationship between Cheltenham's image and the areas of exclusive, speciality shopping may be more bi-directional than that indicated by the business community however. The extent to which these shopping areas exist because of Cheltenham's image or whether they are an instrumental part of the image of Cheltenham is entirely subjective, questionable and beyond the remit of this thesis. However, the exclusivity of these areas ties in nicely with the affluent aspects of Cheltenham's traditional image.

#### **6.5.5 Positive impacts: Creating a place image that is greater than the physical boundaries of place**

Cheltenham's image is something that is latched on to by companies that are located outside the town boundary that is defined by the local authority. This is also true of the bodies that are responsible for marketing as, *"We use Cheltenham as a means of expressing a wider area even though you may have to locate 5 miles outside"* (Informant: Gloucestershire Development Agency). Individual companies that are on the fringes of Cheltenham, but are outside the town's area as defined by the local authority also market themselves as being located within the town as, *"Within a 20 mile radius people would see it as being near Cheltenham and therefore it is Cheltenham – we market ourselves as being in Cheltenham even if it strictly isn't, but it is what people recognise"* (Informant: Zurich Insurance).

In part, this expansion of the town's image may be explained by Cheltenham's proximity to the city of Gloucester and opinions such as,

*Cheltenham has got more value than Gloucester, it is a more valuable name than Gloucester and that is a fact (Informant: Bovis Homes).*

*We did consider a green-field site between Cheltenham and Gloucester, but we like to feel that we are a Cheltenham company rather than a Gloucester company and if we had of moved out of town we would have continued to identify with Cheltenham as there seems to be this image that Cheltenham is better than Gloucester (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*



The strong positive image of Cheltenham, therefore, is something that businesses are anxious to attach themselves to in order to reap the benefits of Cheltenham's image, such as its use for the attraction of highly qualified staff.

*Cheltenham is a very strong brand, and I think we live in an era of brand management and brand values, and Cheltenham for many reasons has very strong brand associations with quality of life, leisure, style and all those sort of things. So if businesses can find a way to get Cheltenham on their headed paper or business cards they will go out of their way to do it (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

*call it snobbish, call it what you like but ... anybody who has the opportunity to latch on to this Cheltenham image will definitely do so. That just goes to reinforce the fact that most of the people most of the time think that Cheltenham is a wonderful place (Informant: Chelsea Building Society).*

*If you say to someone that you work in Cheltenham they immediately get a picture or an image and they know what you are talking about, if you say you work in Shurdington or Innsworth people will say 'where the hell is that' and 'oh, it is down there is it' and instantly the positive image is lost (Informant: Marlborough Stirling).*

#### **6.5.6 Negative impacts: Staff recruitment**

Whilst the image of Cheltenham was seen by some to be an asset for employers when selling Cheltenham as a possible location to new staff, there were also occasions on which the town's image was seen as creating some problems in terms of recruitment. These problems were twofold: Firstly, the strong positive image that the town has was believed to lead to relatively high inflated property prices which can make it difficult to recruit skilled staff. Secondly, aspects of the town's image were seen as not appealing to some sections of the population.

*As Cheltenham is perceived to be a really nice place it seems as if property prices become really inflated. As a result we are finding that our new employees are priced out of the housing market in Cheltenham and are having to live in the cheaper areas of Gloucester if they want to be close to here, but failing that they are living in places like Tewkesbury and Ledbury and travel in every day (Informant: Krone UK Technique).*

*Apart from admittedly being a very nice place to live it is also extremely expensive in relation to other locations. Housing is very, very expensive within Cheltenham itself and we find this when we are talking to prospective employees who, at first, might be quite keen on what we are offering but when they go out looking at estate agents very quickly 9 times out of 10 they*

*say I'm very sorry but I couldn't afford to live there. So in many ways it prices itself out of many aspects of the housing market (Informant: Marlborough Stirling).*

*You can be fairly well down the track of recruiting someone, and then they will start looking at Estate Agent's details and they will think 'oh god, this is not going to work' (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing)*

Housing cost in Cheltenham is also seen as being prohibitive to recruiting staff from some geographical areas as, *"people moving here from London are often surprised that the houses here are not as cheap as they expected"* (Informant: Kraft Foods). Also, *"young people with families face a problem that unless they are moving from the south east it is likely that they will have to move up in the housing market"* (Informant: Gloucestershire Development Agency). Similarly, *"people from the North of England are also difficult to tempt [to Cheltenham] due to the high house prices"* (Informant: GCHQ).

As a result of the high house prices that exist within Cheltenham several local businesses have had to change their recruitment strategy and offer financial incentives, or offer incentives at greater levels than they had previously, to secure the services of employees. For instance,

*We do have some problems in recruiting staff, mainly due to high house prices, only people from the SE think it is cheap to locate here. As a result of this the company offers relocation packages for technical staff as they are difficult to attract here and there is a lack of these skills in the local area. However, in recent times we have had to lower the grade of staff to which this offer applies as we are finding it hard to attract the right calibre of people and there is a distinct shortage of skills in our area (Informant: Krone UK Technique).*

*We offer a relocation incentive of up to £8,000, as that fits in with Inland Revenue regulations to avoid tax payments. We usually say that this offer applies only to senior managers. However we have considered individual cases on their merits (Informant: Chelsea Building Society).*

*We do offer a relocation incentive, but not at all levels. We offer it from middle management level onwards although this has changed in recent times as we only used to offer it to senior management (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

There is also some evidence to suggest that Cheltenham's traditional image is not one that is attractive to some sections of the community,

*Although [Cheltenham] has all these things going for it, how can the town shake off its stuffy image and show it to be a dynamic, thrusting, cutting edge kind of place which are not the words that would leap to mind. It is an issue for us, we employ quite a few people ... web designers, internet programmers etc. and attracting people to the place and the company is important and sometimes it is quite difficult (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

Cheltenham's externally perceived image is also believed to be problematic not only in recruiting staff, but also in terms of the recruitment of students as, "*Cheltenham is difficult to market to students because of its perceived image, it has the perception of a middle to upper class enclave*" (Informant: University of Gloucestershire).

There was also an isolated case in which the media coverage of a news story in Cheltenham was believed to have had a detrimental effect on staff recruitment from staff from ethnic minorities,

*Cheltenham's image can play an important part in recruitment, however for some it will be a disincentive. For instance, it is a disincentive to employees from an ethnic minority background and may relate to the coverage of the non-selection of a black Tory candidate to represent Cheltenham which led to Cheltenham being seen as ethnically unfriendly (Informant: GCHQ).*

#### **6.5.7 Negative impacts: An image that is bad for floatation on the stock market**

One of the informants for this thesis had recently been floated on the stock exchange. However, they received professional advice that Cheltenham's image may not be suitable for a company going through this process.

*When we were going through floatation Cheltenham was seen as a backwater its location between Birmingham and Bristol, its got lousy communications, you can't get to it by train easily. In the city, if you can't get there in an hour and a half from London by train you are nowhere. ... When we were floating we used a floatation team who came down and looked us over. They recommended that we shouldn't use Cheltenham as a floatation point. We got a categorical no. In the end, this company was floated from a site in Bristol as you could catch a train from London on the hour every hour and then we were 10 minutes from the train station in Bristol. It was purely location that we didn't use Cheltenham, that and the image it has is all wrong for floatation. Regency is seen as old hat, the city wants modern and high tech, you have to be a modern thrusting business seen as being in tune with the modern world and the image that Cheltenham has certainly isn't that (Informant: Bovis Homes).*

The significance of this is that it reflects the perception of Cheltenham that exists in the minds of the business community that are not located in the town. This image, it would appear, is analogous to the traditional image that was identified within the newspaper coverage and also appears to confirm the way in which Cheltenham's business community believe that people external to the town perceive Cheltenham.

#### **6.5.8 Negative impacts: Concerns over the number or type of festivals**

Whilst it doesn't relate specifically to the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals, a number of concerns were expressed by informants about the efficacy of the use of festivals as a means of producing economic impacts. For instance, it was believed that *"there is a danger of doing it to death and fragmenting it so that it becomes less noticeable"* (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing). Similarly, there is a *"danger ... that it makes Cheltenham look like a town that is available for five days at a time, there is nothing continuous"* (Informant: UCAS).

Concerns are also expressed that those responsible for the management of Cheltenham's festivals should not expand the town's repertoire to include an event which may prove to be detrimental to Cheltenham's image.

*As long as they don't harm Cheltenham's image I don't see any need to refrain. A festival to harm Cheltenham's image, for instance, would be a large drinking festival, or a festival that goes badly wrong. It could also have impacts on residents where it gets to the point where it causes hostility. For instance, retailers see no point in the horse racing as people don't come in to the town to shop. The racecourse is setting itself up as a year-round venue which may cause problems with traffic also the Christian festival was a problem for some with the music late at night which may be a timely warning that you can have too much of a good thing. We shouldn't try to compete with Glastonbury. Cheltenham is promoted as the place to have a good time, the evening economy is booming, although people are getting worried about Cheltenham late at night because of the vomit, violence and fear of young people* (Informant: Gloucestershire Development Agency).

These concerns, however, appeared to be unfounded as,

*Cheltenham certainly shouldn't rest on its reputation. Image can be fragile and needs to be continuously developed. It shouldn't also rely on its past, thankfully though it doesn't have much of a past, it is only 200 years old the place anyway. We do think about what type of events that we have here, for instance if you were to see images of people crawling through mud or getting blown away, either mentally or physically that would destroy the credibility of the image that we have worked so hard to produce and maintain. You only need one bad event* (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).

The production and maintenance of image, however, is not done without reference to the traditional image of the town as,

*I often feel the hand of the old Borough Council reaching out towards me saying that do we really need this, do we really need the fairground etc. I occasionally feel the heavy hand of Cheltenham past on my shoulder saying come on Mr ... do we really need to use the racecourse for these kinds of events, shouldn't we just use it for events that are a bit more suitable and in a sense it makes me a bit more keen to get such events. ... I also get involved in organising and managing the non race-related events here, not because I am any great expert but because I am very conscious of the image that the racecourse has and therefore the danger of making not a great deal of money, but upsetting a great deal of people by putting an event on that may not be suitable. ... Cheltenham's economy is very fragile, something like the national hunt festival being cancelled quickly goes through the county, tourism isn't a real industry and it is often entirely dependent on image and if that image takes a knock or is perceived badly things could change here pretty rapidly (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

#### **6.5.9 Negative impacts: A lack of productivity**

During the course of one of the initial interviews an issue was raised that, whilst it may not specifically relate to an impact of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals, may relate to the number of festivals and other entertainments that are available in the town. It was indicated that employees at businesses in Cheltenham had a lower productivity rate than their counterparts at branches of the same company elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The initial reaction to what was an unexpected aspect of the hosting of festivals was one of scepticism, however, it was decided to incorporate it within future interviews to see if this was an isolated phenomenon or a 'feature' of businesses in Cheltenham.

*A major employer in the financial services sector was complaining that their staff in Cheltenham were less productive than other parts of the country as the lifestyle was too comfortable. They were happy to go home at 5 o'clock and wanted to be out enjoying themselves instead of busting a gut to do overtime and they weren't competing to get up the greasy pole ... This is a criticism that I have heard from more than one employer, that the workforce is not quite as productive as it could be (Informant: Gloucestershire Development Agency).*

*That does ring a bell, here there is a core of people working all hours but there is still a mass exodus at 5 o'clock. People that come here from London seem to be surprised in their first two weeks about people's working habits and that people always seem to leave on time. The words 'Cheltenham*

*factor' have been used amongst our management team in order to describe it (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

*If you would have come to see me at 4pm instead of 2pm you would have seen a long queue of traffic lining up at the gates to leave. The mentality here is also very different from other similar government departments that I have worked at, although that is not to say that people don't work the hours when they really have to. Perhaps you could say that GCHQ, like Cheltenham itself, has developed its own way of doing things (Informant: GCHQ).*

#### **6.5.10 Summary: The impacts of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals**

Cheltenham's image, as constructed through the practices of the media, is seen as something that has both positive and negative impacts on economic development within the town. Whilst previous research has indicated that place marketing initiatives should have positive economic impacts on locations utilising them as part of a wider policy of economic regeneration (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Madsen, 1992; Kearns and Philo, 1993), it has failed to identify the specific impacts that these initiatives have. The research has also failed to note the extent to which a marketed place image can lead to negative economic impacts other than those specifically related to social exclusion and the redistribution of wealth (Bianchini, 1993a; Beazley *et al*, 1995; Atkinson and Laurier, 1998; Cox, 1998).

However, it is seen, in the majority of cases, that it is Cheltenham's traditional image that is primarily responsible for producing the economic impacts. For instance, in terms of the recruitment of highly qualified staff, it is the nice, safe, pleasant working environment that is seen as the major attraction for highly qualified staff. These features could be drawn directly from Cheltenham's traditional genteel spa town image. Where mention is made of Cheltenham's festivals, it is being used as a supplement to this traditional image in an effort to show a cultural diversity and give an alternative impression of vibrant town that has a multitude of quality festivals and events throughout the year. Therefore, the image that is seen as being attractive to potential staff is one that is constructed with reference to Cheltenham's traditional image and the town's festivals are something that are only used as a selling point at the time of interview.

The responses in relation to Cheltenham's image as being responsible for the attraction of large national and multinational companies are broadly similar to previous research

(Burgess, 1992; Young and Lever, 1997; Bradley *et al*, 2002) in that image can be an important, if rarely decisive factor in the location or relocation decision making process. It is interesting, however, to note that there is a belief within the business community that image is an important consideration within the location decision making process of other companies. Whilst there is no reason to imagine that any of these informants were privy to the decision making process of other businesses, it may indicate that place image may play a greater factor than had previously been indicated. At present, the current understanding of the location decision making process amongst businesses doesn't support this, however, a study designed to compare the attributes that were important in one businesses move with attributes that are believed to be important in the decision making process of other businesses may indicate a difference between what respondents claim were important factors for their moves and the factors that they believe are important for other relocations. It is possible to suggest, however, that a location that is perceived positively can bring positive impacts such as the attraction and retention of highly qualified staff and thus relocating to an area that is perceived positively may be beneficial to individual businesses.

On a practical level, it is not surprising that businesses are keen to attach themselves to an area that is perceived to have a positive image in a similar way in which you could expect them to distance themselves from areas that have problematical or negative images. This phenomenon, however, is something that has largely been ignored by geographers. The closest body of work is that which is concerned with spatial externality fields, which, according to Harvey (1970, cited by Humphreys *et al*, 1983, p.402), "exist when activities generate side effects which are not reflected in costs or prices". The majority of research into spatial externalities has, however, focused upon the negative impacts associated with perceived nuisances such as perceived environmental hazards and sports stadia (Dear, 1978; Bale, 1990; Mason and Robins, 1991; Chase and Healey, 1995). There is, therefore, a need to expand our knowledge in this area to encompass the way in which strong positive images can have the effect of metaphorically broadening the size of an area as businesses and individuals seek to identify themselves with the perceived positive attributes of an area.

Whilst Cheltenham's image is seen as having a positive impact upon economic development processes within the town, there are also aspects of the town's image that are also seen as being conducive to the production of negative impacts. These negative

impacts are focused on Cheltenham's traditional image and indicate that the possession of a strong positive image may not be the panacea for the problems of the reduction in manufacturing industry and decline in economic fortunes that has previously been suggested (Holcomb, 1993; Selby and Morgan, 1996; Short and Kim, 1998). In this instance, it is believed by the business community that Cheltenham's strong positive traditional image is responsible for the local housing stock being over-priced and also that it may not be conducive to attracting staff from certain sub-sections of the community or those with certain skills. Cheltenham's image is, therefore, seen in a dual role as it is something that is conducive to the attraction of highly qualified staff but, at the same time, this image is seen as being a factor in making it difficult to finalise the recruitment process when the candidate examines the availability and pricing of local housing. As a result, local businesses have had to adapt their recruitment processes to overcome this barrier. This has been achieved either by offering a financial incentive for potential staff to relocate to the area or, for those businesses that previously operated this policy, an expansion of those that automatically qualify to receive the benefit.

The instance of the company who was advised not to use Cheltenham as point from which to float on the stock exchange serves to highlight some of the problems that the business community see with Cheltenham's traditional genteel spa town image. Here, an external party is described as perceiving Cheltenham largely in respect of the town's traditional image. This, therefore, reflects the concerns expressed at the end of Chapter five in relation to the ephemerality of the images that are contained within the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals, that although they are great in number, they may not be sufficient to dislodge the town's traditional image. The pressure of this traditional image is also within the mind of those responsible for the production and management of Cheltenham's festivals and it almost seems as if it places a stranglehold on the potential for innovation and a break with tradition within Cheltenham.

## **6.6 How the business community would market Cheltenham**

In order to place the images of Cheltenham that are contained within the media coverage of the town's festivals and events into the broader context of marketing Cheltenham generally each of the informants were asked for the features that they would use if they were asked to market the town to make it more attractive to new businesses and new employees. The general consensus of opinion was that



Cheltenham's traditional image is one that may not appeal to many people and that an effort should be made to make Cheltenham seem to be a livelier, more vibrant place and that the number of festivals taking place in Cheltenham could play an important role in adapting the image in this regard.

*My natural inclination is to talk about regency Cheltenham, beautiful Pittville Park, the Pump Room etc. but you would have to be careful that it didn't come over as the staid, retired colonels type image, but that is the beauty of Cheltenham, the architecture, but weave in to there somewhere about however for young people there is a lot to do, nightlife, lots going on, festivals etc. (Informant: Chelsea Building Society).*

*They would be foolish to throw the stuffy image out with the bathwater, but it is attractive and it is undoubtedly part of what attracts people here but there is a danger of Cheltenham become set and ending up as an old relic. The town could do with being a bit more adventurous and bold, but if I were them I would focus on its strong points such as quality of life, countryside school and festivals (Informant: Nelson Thornes Publishing).*

*There is a need to make the image more vibrant and lively, and the festivals could play a major part in that. We should also make more of the key businesses that are already here. An note the areas in which we have expertise such as financial services with Zurich and the Chelsea Building Society and also the growing number of companies in the computing sector (Informant: UCAS).*

*What the town needs to promote is not just images of how nice and pretty it is but also how vibrant the town, that is not always reflected in the press, who seem to portray it as a very stuffy place, populated by people who are very straight laced about their attitudes, but the town itself is much more dynamic than it is depicted (Informant: Kraft Foods).*

The way in which Cheltenham's business community would market the town correlates with many of the negative impacts of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals and events. As noted previously, Cheltenham's traditional image, which is believed to be the one that people external to the town have, has positive and negative impacts upon local economic development within the town. In their vision of the marketing of Cheltenham, the business community are trying to maintain the positive impacts associated with the traditional image whilst simultaneously introducing a more lively and vibrant image to counter some of the problems within the traditional image that they perceive to lead to negative

economic benefits. A key element of this move toward a more vibrant and lively image is the incorporation of Cheltenham's festivals as a marketing tool for the town. This is, however, a contradiction on previous findings that indicated that the business community believed that the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals tended to revolve around the traditional image of the town to the neglect of the introduction of what the business community see as images that are more relevant to modern-day Cheltenham.

## **6.7 Additional items of interest from interview data**

Two additional items that were not part of the original remit of this study emerged as a result of the interview stage of this study. Whilst these items are not directly concerned with the impacts of the images of festivals that are produced by the media and their subsequent impact on local economic development, they have a relevance to the broader understanding of the way in which festivals are viewed as a mechanism of place marketing and the relationship between the organisers and promoters of festivals and the media that cover them.

### **6.7.1 The reaction to economic impact assessments**

Economic impact assessments have become one of the standard measures for measuring the success or failure of many festivals (Rodgers, 1989; Long and Perdue, 1990; Hughes and Gratton, 1992). However, comments made in the course of this study indicate that these impact assessments are given little credence by those that are responsible for the organisation and management of Cheltenham's festivals. For instance,

*The Network Q economic study was done as a means of selling the event to Cardiff, and Cardiff bought it and Cardiff must have done their brains as it gave the impression that the event was quite valuable. They claimed it was the most watched sporting event in Britain, but to do that they must have counted every time a curtain flickers when a car went by, the whole thing is a bit of an illusion (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

*In Cheltenham we have never really had to argue the case as a lot of other local authorities have to, it has been recognised that [festivals are] important. ... There have been economic impact studies done, Edinburgh did one, Bath did one fairly recently but frankly I think that they are crap, there are all these multiplier factors and so on which are meaningless. ... Network Q did one, but it as not made public, the total impact was calculated at £110m but it contains petrol bought by drivers and spectators anywhere between Milton Keynes and Aberystwyth. ... I am really sceptical of these economic impact studies, which are always done for a purpose which is to justify the spend. ... But we use them, of course we do, but we use*

*other people's figures rather than produce my own, as they would be equally crap* (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).

The figures that were mentioned in many of the media reports following the cancellation of the 2001 National Hunt Festival were also criticised as,

*The figure of £10 - £15m lost to the Cheltenham festival to the town is a very silly figure to use, ...I was being interviewed and being asked how much would be lost and to be honest I had no idea. I was hearing different figures every day for the amount of money lost in Cheltenham and in Gloucestershire as a whole but I couldn't say with any great conviction as we haven't done an economic study* (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).

Economic impact assessments, then, are treated with a great deal of scepticism with those that are involved with the management and organisation of festivals and events on a daily basis. The lack of the production of these assessments for Cheltenham's festivals may indicate that, as was indicated earlier, there is a belief that the main impact of the town's festivals is in the image that they create for Cheltenham and not in the amount of money that they bring in.

#### **6.7.2 The Management of the media by the organisers of Cheltenham's festivals**

During the course of the interview process it became apparent that those responsible for the management of Cheltenham's festivals have active relationships with the media that produce the coverage of the town's festivals. This relationship, it would appear, exists not only to maximise the media coverage opportunities that relate to the festivals but also allows a degree of what is depicted in the media and when this coverage appears. For example,

*We organise it so there is a story every week for the festival from the first of January. We believe in treating the media well, we like to get close to them, we take them all away, put them up in nice places, see how good they are at getting up early after spending all night in the casinos and generally getting close to them. We are great believers in doing all that* (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).

*One of the best examples was the way we involved Zara Phillips, as we were looking to revamp our junior membership and I hadn't actually found a vehicle to do it. We wanted it to be run by young people for young people and one of the staff here knew Zara socially so we got her in. We launched that and that got unbelievable coverage and immediately the phones were red hot with the sort of people you would die to have writing articles wanting to write articles. Certainly all the tabloids, and most of the*

*broadsheets but also TV and radio. We had them all waiting patiently in line, and we decided how we wanted to release and manage that. They allowed us to control it and allowed us to verify and agree draft copy etc. That didn't do us any harm and we sold a lot of membership (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

*It would be great if the jockeys were a bit less friendly to each other that would be a help, a pub brawl wouldn't do anyone any real harm and it helps to build up a profile of the sport and it helps to get the stories about Cheltenham and racing to a much wider audience from those that would normally read the racing post or the racing pages. Perhaps I will talk a few jockeys into having a bit of a dust up for next year! (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

*You cannot risk the media picking up their own impression, you have to give them their lines, tell them this is what so and so says. Look after the press, look after the photographers, get them to point their cameras in the right direction and with any luck they will show what you want them to show (Informant: Cheltenham Racecourse).*

*The [media consultants] cost us quite a lot of money, but given that one of the reasons that we exist is in order to create a profile for the town, we consider it to be money well spent. ... Two years ago we had Michael Berkeley write a new piece especially for the festival ... who, for the media, conveniently lost [the transcript of] his opera and then found it. That created a good story (Informant: Cheltenham Borough Council).*

The media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals, then, is something that, to an extent, is designed, controlled and managed at a local level. This level of control, needs to be questioned however, as whilst it may seem that the festival promoters can exercise a degree of management in what appears in the media, it has previously been indicated that they were as dissatisfied with the images of Cheltenham that were produced as were the business community generally. Therefore, although there appears to be a close relationship between the media and the organisers of Cheltenham's festivals and events, the extent to which they are able to dictate the content of the subsequently produced media reports may have been over-stated.

## **6.8 Summary**

The construction of images of Cheltenham by the local business community and the key mechanisms that they believe are important for the construction of this image indicate, conclusively, that the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals and events is a significant mechanism by which people receive images of place and subsequently construct an image for the town. The similarity between the images of Cheltenham that

were contained within its media coverage identified in chapter five and the images that the business community believe people external to Cheltenham have suggests that the images that are transmitted as part of the media coverage of the town's festivals are transferred to the way in which the town is perceived.

There is, however, some concern amongst the business community that Cheltenham's external image is constructed largely in line with the traditional image identified in chapter five and not with the constructs identified as being part of a new or innovative image for the town. This concern corresponds to the findings of Boyle and Hughes (1991) in that a contrast is drawn between place identity (how a group of people think a place is actually like) and place image (how it is perceived externally). This indicates that the images of Cheltenham that are projected via the media are believed to be re-enforcing the traditional image of the town and the elements that are contained within media reports that are categorised as new or innovative are not helping to deconstruct this widely held image.

Whilst there is a conflict between the images of Cheltenham that are produced in the media and the image of the town held by the business community, it is widely believed that the media image of the town, based upon a traditional image, is a key determinant in its economic success. The traditional image of Cheltenham, however, is believed to have both positive and negative impacts on economic development within the town. Elements of the new, innovative image are also introduced by individual members of the business community in interview situations as an additional enticement to potential employees. As such, Cheltenham's festivals are being employed as a complimentary factor to the high quality of life that is generally believed to be implied by the town's traditional image.

The media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals is seen by some as a central element to the production and reproduction Cheltenham's traditional image, whilst for others it is a mechanism that seeks to challenge this image by introducing an element of vibrancy. It would appear, however, that the images of Cheltenham that appear in the media, are, to a certain extent, regulated and managed at a local level by the organisers and promoters of the festivals.

These competing discourses on the nature of Cheltenham's image and the impact it has, both in a positive and negative way, highlight one of the problems of researching place image. Place images are constructed by individuals from the information they receive, the experiences that they have and are processed by reference to existing beliefs and attitudes (see figure 2.1, p.10). The result of this is that each place image is as individual as the person that creates it. This difference in the place images that people hold about Cheltenham is demonstrated in the results presented in this chapter. For instance, The distinction between the impacts that the traditional/external image and the innovative internal image of Cheltenham is not at all clear cut. This is highlighted by some respondents regarding Cheltenham's traditional image as primarily positive in that it brings benefits to the town such as temporary visitors and attracting highly qualified staff there are also others that interpret this image as being out of date and not in keeping with 'modern day' Cheltenham. Conversely, there are those that see a new, innovative image, particularly with regard to the development of a greater number of variety of festivals, as something that may negate much of the perceived benefits of the traditional image.

Place image is, then, something that is constantly shifting and is difficult to define due to the number of competing discourses. What is clear, however, is the role of the media in creating and maintaining these discourses and the way in which these images can produce both positive and negative economic benefits.

## **Chapter Seven: Summary and Conclusions**

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the findings of this thesis, evaluate the research and its conclusions, suggest some areas for future investigation and to make recommendations for policy makers in relation to the use of festivals as a mechanism of achieving local economic development. In order to achieve this, this chapter is broken down into five sections. Firstly, the aims of the thesis are revisited and the methodology adopted to achieve these aims is evaluated. The second section provides a summary of the critical issues identified within the literature review and conclusions are made regarding the main aims of the project and reflects upon the relationship between this thesis and the existing academic literature. Section three identifies possible directions for future research on the use of the media coverage of festivals as a mechanism for achieving economic development. The penultimate section utilises the findings from this study to make recommendations for policy makers. The final section reiterates, in summary form, the key contribution to knowledge of this thesis.

### **7.1 The aims of this thesis**

The aims of this thesis, outlined in chapter one, were threefold:

- To identify and analyse the images of place that are portrayed in the media
- To understand the ways in which the media coverage of a location is important in the construction of place image by key economic actors
- To evaluate the tangible impacts of the media coverage of place on economic development.

#### **7.1.1 Evaluating the methodology adopted in this thesis**

A strongpoint of this study of place marketing is that it comprises findings from both the analysis of the images that are produced and transmitted to external audiences and the images of place that are constructed by key economic actors. Previous studies have placed too great an emphasis on the content of place marketing campaigns to the neglect of developing an understanding of how people react to these images and how they are used as the basis for action. There has also been a neglect within media research of the connection between media images of locations and their perception amongst the recipients of image.

The first stage of this study comprised a collection of the newspaper reports of four selected festivals, which enabled the collation of information relating to the amount of coverage that they receive together with an analysis of its content. The analysis of this coverage was essential for informing the second part of this study where the images of place contained within the media reports are compared with the way in which one of the audiences for these reports construct images of place and identifying the impacts that this has by a process of qualitative interviews. This second stage, forms the core of the research and represents the first attempt to compare the images of place that are contained within media reports to that which is constructed by the audience for these reports. The analysis of these data also gave an indication of the factors that are believed to be responsible for the construction of images of place. The third, and final stage of this thesis was to identify the impacts that the media images of place can have on local economic development. The results from this study have enhanced our understanding of the processes and mechanisms responsible for the construction of images of place, and also allows, for the first time, the detailed impacts that images of place can have on economic development to be revealed.

The data collected in relation to the content of the media reports in stage one and the interview data collected for stages two and three could only be achieved by using qualitative means as each stage involves an analysis of data that is not easily quantifiable. For instance, stages two and three draw upon the experiences of a group of key economic actors and therefore examines processes such as the thoughts, intentions and reactions to images of place that are not directly observable. This approach allowed for not only the exploration of the aims of this thesis but also retained the flexibility to explore new and unexpected issues as they arose.

The choice of case study area was also important. Past research into place marketing has placed too great an emphasis on large urban areas to the neglect of the experiences of small and medium sized towns. The choice of Cheltenham, therefore, allows the expansion of our knowledge to include the place marketing experience of areas outside of that which already exists. Cheltenham is also a location that is marketed on this basis of its festivals and events and also faces several issues relating to economic development that make it essential for the town to both retain existing businesses as well as attract new businesses which makes it an ideal choice for this study.



The range and type of informants interviewed in this study is comprehensive and included the senior managers of the two principal bodies responsible for the organisation and management of Cheltenham's largest festivals, the senior managers of the businesses that have relocated to, or started new businesses in, Cheltenham in the last twenty years and the senior management of the town's largest, well established, businesses. The comprehensiveness of those interviewed allows this research to draw upon a wide range of experiences and allows the development of a locally grounded perspective on place marketing and the impacts that it has on local economic development.

## **7.2 Summary of critical issues and main conclusions**

The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of critical issues identified in the literature review, make conclusions regarding the three main aims of the project and to position this research within the existing academic literature.

### **7.2.1 The media coverage of place contained within reports of festivals and events**

The procurement and staging of high profile festivals and events is becoming a central facet of place marketing strategies (Myerscough, 1989; Bianchini, 1993; Atkinson and Laurier, 1998) that are designed to counter the changing industrial and economic base in western Europe and north America (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Wilkinson, 1992; Gold and Ward, 1994). The centrality of festivals to the urban marketing process may relate to their ability to disseminate images of place through the local, national and international media reaching a far greater and far broader audience than conventional place marketing campaigns would do. The images of festivals that are transmitted are believed to act as a mechanism to help in the production of rejuvenated images of place and counter the negative images associated with a declining manufacturing sector (Garnsey, 1984; Sutton, 1984, Getz, 1991). Therefore, festivals can help to bring a competitive edge to a location and are becoming increasingly important complementary factors in the competition between places to attract footloose industries, entrepreneurs, tourists and residents (Bianchini, 1993).

The current academic literature on place marketing generally, and the use of festivals as a marketing tool specifically, however, has several gaps which have important implications for our understanding of the way in which festivals are used as part of a broader strategy of place marketing (Bradley *et al*, 2002). At present, the literature has

placed too great an emphasis on large urban areas to the neglect of the way in which small and medium towns compete for the limited pool of company relocations and highly skilled employees (Lever, 2001; Millington, 2002). Small and medium towns, however, may play an increasingly important role in the place marketing arena as companies continue to be freed from the locational constraints of being close to a source of raw materials or a source of power as part of the transition from a manufacturing based industry to one that is dominated by the tertiary sector. As a result, businesses and highly skilled professionals can choose to locate themselves in areas not traditionally associated with industry, and thus, small and medium towns that are perceived to have a high quality of life may benefit from this transition (Johnson and Rasker, 1993; 1995; Bovaird, 1995). Also, whilst current studies have provided a good understanding of the planning of place marketing campaigns and the socio-political milieu in which they exist, little is known in relation to the impacts that place marketing campaigns have upon the economic development of individual locations (Young and Lever, 1997; Bradley *et al*, 2002). Moreover, whilst festivals are widely believed to be an increasingly important facet of place marketing strategies due to the media coverage that they receive and their association with quality of life issues, there has not been, to date, a comprehensive analysis of the media coverage that they receive.

The first aim of this thesis, therefore, was to analyse both the amount and content of the media coverage of four festivals that took place in Cheltenham, England. Whereas previous research has analysed the content of place marketing campaigns, the analysis has stopped at this point and the broader connotations of these policies in regard to the development of place has been ignored (Burgess, 1990; Avraham, 2000). In this instance, the analysis of the amount and content of the media coverage was used to inform the remainder of the study with specific relation to aims two and three. This was achieved by collecting the national newspaper reports relating to the four selected festivals for a period starting a week before the festival started and ending a week after the festival had finished. In total, 308 articles were published in relation to the four selected festivals during this time period. The content of this coverage was then compared with 81 newspaper articles that related to general news stories printed in relation to Cheltenham in the national press in a period in excess of three years.

The results showed that the four selected festivals generated a great deal of media coverage. This coverage eclipses the media attention of the town generally as there were

nearly four times as many reports of the four selected festivals in one year than there were for general news stories for Cheltenham in a three year period. The media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals, therefore, places Cheltenham in the media spotlight to a far greater extent than it would receive normally. This finding is significant as media coverage in general has been shown to be important in relation to economic development (Burgess, 1990; Parisi and Holcomb, 1994; Myers-Jones and Brooker-Gross, 1994; Avraham, 2000).

An analysis of the content of the media coverage suggests that a complex and contrasting image for Cheltenham is constructed through the media. The analysis of the coverage of the four selected festivals indicated that there were a set of identifiable constructs that permeate the boundaries of individual festivals that serve to provide a strong positive image for Cheltenham. Many of these images serve to draw attention to the quality of the festivals themselves, the performers attending the festivals and their performances and Cheltenham benefits by association.

In respect of the portrayal of Cheltenham, its image appears to reflect a contrast between an old traditional image and a new innovative one. The traditional image is centred around images of a genteel spa town that is home to a conservative, wealthy, aged populace consisting of retired colonels from the East India Company. In contrast, the new image is constructed largely with reference to the aspects of innovation and hedonism that are associated with some of Cheltenham's festivals.

An analysis of the media coverage that Cheltenham receives outside of the coverage within the sports pages for the National Hunt Festival and the Network Q Rally and the culture section for the festivals of Music and Literature, indicated that the images of Cheltenham are constructed in a similar fashion to that which is contained within the images contained within the reports on the four selected festivals. However, these articles often use the traditional image of the town in order to introduce a story about the town or to draw attention to something that does not fit within this image. The new innovative images that are contained within these additional reports also have a connection to Cheltenham's festivals due to the many lamentations about the loss of the hedonistic experience that is associated with the National Hunt Festival by journalists following the cancellation of the 2001 National Hunt Festival due to the foot and mouth crisis.

An analysis of the amount and content of the media images of place, however, only gives us an insight into one part of the place marketing process in that it focuses on the content of the message and not the ways in which images are received, decoded and used as the basis for actions. It also fails to address concerns within the literature in that it neglects to acknowledge the wider process of the importance of the media in the construction of images of place. Moreover, it tells us nothing about the way in which the individual constructs of the images of place are transferred to external audiences and whether these constructs subsequently become a part of the images of the Cheltenham that are formed.

It is necessary, therefore, to deepen our understanding of the role of the media as a part of the place marketing process. Consequently, the next stage of the research drew upon the experiences of a group of key economic actors to examine their images of place and the identification of the mechanisms that they believe are important in its construction.

### **7.2.2 The importance of the media in the construction of images of place**

Despite the media becoming increasingly integrated into everyday life (Burgess and Gold, 1985b; Harvey, 1989), little is understood about the extent to which images of place that are transmitted via the media are responsible for the construction of images of place by the audience for various media productions (Avraham, 2000). The academic literature relating to the importance of the media in this regard, however, suffers from similar deficiencies as that relating to place marketing in that much is known about the content of various media images, but relatively little is known about the relationship between media images of place and the subsequent creation of meaning (but see Burgess, 1982; Young and Lever, 1997; Bradley *et al*, 2002). However, it is largely asserted that the media play an essential role in the construction of place images (Gold, 1980) and that, for some, a place can become the image that the media projects (Burd, 1977). As a result, urban managers are paying increasing attention to the way that locations for which they are responsible are being portrayed in the media (Neill, 1995; Millington, 2002). The relationship between media image and an individual's image of place remains, however, purely speculative and the extent to which media coverage, be it positive or negative, affects an individual's image and the decisions that they make about places remains unknown (Avraham, 2000).

These concerns were addressed by analysing the images of place held by the local business community as an example of a group of key economic actors. This was achieved by conducting 17 individual interviews with key figures within Cheltenham's business community. A key objective of these interviews was to identify the constructs that the business community used in creating an image for Cheltenham as this could be compared with the images of place that were contained within the media coverage of the town and its festivals and events.

The results showed that there was an almost universal belief that the media is one of the principal mechanisms that are important in the construction of images of place. However, it was believed that this image was achieved through the dissemination of a strictly limited stereotype that broadly coincided with the traditional image of Cheltenham identified previously. These stereotypes permeated the boundaries of individual media genres and were identified within for example, news stories and television dramas. It was also believed that Cheltenham's traditional image, although disagreed with in terms of its relevance to modern day Cheltenham, has been enduring and may be considered, by some, to promote an aura of quality.

The contrast between the traditional and new image that was identified within the media coverage of Cheltenham and its festivals also manifested itself within the interview data as informants contrasted their own personal view of the town against that which they see as the popular image of the town that is held by people from outside Cheltenham. With the evidence for this new innovative image for Cheltenham being drawn principally from the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals it was suggested that these images may be seen as ephemeral and as an insubstantial gloss, whilst the traditional image remains dominant and persists.

The media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals is also seen as a mechanism that serves to reinforce the town's traditional image. This, in part, is explained by reference to Cheltenham's association with a number of high profile cultural festivals which are believed to be easily accommodated within the traditional image and also by reference to the type of media coverage and the type of media involved in the dissemination of information that these festivals receive. Cheltenham's festivals, therefore, are viewed as an essential part of the branding of Cheltenham to external audiences. Moreover, they

are seen as an excellent mechanism for the dissemination of images of place and as an important factor in the construction of Cheltenham's quality image.

### **7.2.3 The identification of the impacts of the media coverage of place on economic development**

Despite the centrality of place marketing campaigns to the urban development process and the expenditure on the development and management of these campaigns, surprisingly little is known in relation to their importance in generating positive economic benefits (Millington, 1995; Bradley *et al*, 2002). This lack of empirical evidence, however, has not prevented various commentators from claiming that place marketing campaigns have many wide ranging positive impacts such as the procurement of footloose industries, job creation and the attraction of highly qualified staff (Holcomb, 1993; Solomos and Back, 1995). Where place marketing initiatives are seen as leading to the production of negative impacts these relate to the socio-cultural fabric of society and not on economic development (Ruddick, 1990; Lovering, 1995; Neill, 1995; Leitner and Sheppard, 1998). These negative impacts are generally identified as the alienation of certain groups from the development process or in the production of images that are not believed to be illustrative of the 'true' cultural or traditional representation of place (Dunn *et al*, 1995; Hall and Hubbard, 1998).

This thesis has addressed this empirical lacuna by identifying what the impacts of the media coverage of festivals and events were on economic development in Cheltenham. This was achieved by conducting 17 interviews with individuals drawn from the senior management of the town's largest businesses and those that had relocated to the town in the preceding twenty years.

The impacts that Cheltenham's festivals have on local economic development are connected with the image that they help to create for the town. This image, it is believed, is responsible for producing both positive and negative impacts at the local level. The positive impacts that were identified include the attraction of highly qualified staff that are enticed to apply for positions within Cheltenham's businesses due to the town's association with a high quality of life, relative safety and cultural diversity which, in part, may be related to the number of different festivals and events that take place in Cheltenham. The image that is seen as an attractant, however, is that previously identified as Cheltenham's traditional image. It is only at the stage where candidates

arrive for interview that Cheltenham is marketed to them as an innovative, progressive town that is culturally vibrant.

Whilst place marketing campaigns are usually aimed at attracting footloose industries, this study, in a similar manner to studies conducted by Burgess (1988) and Young and Lever (1997), found little evidence to suggest that images of place are a key variable in the location decision making process. There were, however, views expressed both by those responsible for managing Cheltenham's festivals and from the business community that image had played a role in the decision making process for other businesses. Whilst these views may only be regarded as speculation, it may indicate that place image is a consideration in locational decision making but it is rarely a decisive factor.

Cheltenham's image was also believed to have a positive impact on the areas of speciality retailing within the town. It is reasoned that these areas would not be able to exist if they relied solely on the town's resident population for custom and that they rely upon the visitors that are attracted to the town by its quality image. This quality image is also believed to extend beyond the physical boundaries imposed by the Borough Council. This metaphorical expansion of place has benefits for both the business community and those who are responsible for local economic development planning. It is a benefit to the business community as even though they may be located outside Cheltenham's designated area they are still able to draw upon the benefits of its image such as the attraction of highly qualified staff. For those responsible for economic development, the benefit lies in having an increased amount of land available for business expansions and relocations. They are, therefore, partly freed from the locational constraints of having to market land that is located only within the defined town boundaries.

Cheltenham's image does, however, have negative impacts upon the town. Paradoxically, whilst Cheltenham's image is seen as being an attractant to highly qualified staff, this image is also believed to be partly responsible for inflated house prices within the town. These prices, it is believed, can be responsible for many prospective employees having to either refuse offers of employment or choose housing outside of Cheltenham and commute in to work every day. In response to this perceived problem, many local businesses have been forced to offer relocation expenses to a much

broader level than previously in order to compete effectively against businesses located elsewhere to obtain the quality of staff that they require.

There was also evidence to suggest that Cheltenham's image. As perceived externally, was too old fashioned to be suitable for a company floating on the stock exchange. The endurance of Cheltenham's traditional image may mean that this is an obstacle that other expanding businesses in Cheltenham may face in the future when seeking to obtain additional capital by floating on the stock exchange.

### **7.3 Directions for future research**

This research started by drawing upon three seemingly disparate areas of academic literature; place marketing, construction of place image through the media and the economic impacts of festivals and events. Drawing upon the conclusions of the research it becomes apparent that the media images of place contained within the reports of festivals and events can have significant implications on locally situated economic development. The analysis of the data generated for this thesis has suggested that there are several areas where there are still significant questions that need to be addressed which have the potential to expand upon our current understanding of the process, dissemination and impacts of place marketing still further.

#### **7.3.1 The effectiveness of image modification strategies**

The results from the analysis of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals indicated that the coverage of these festivals contained a significant amount of information that was conducive to constructing a new, innovative image for the town. The analysis of the interview data, however, suggested that the external image of the town was more associated with the old, traditional image of the town and, thus, the new images may be regarded as ephemeral and are not able to challenge this established image. The generation of new images of place is one of the central constructs of place marketing campaigns (Ward, 1998, Hall, 1998b), however, this research suggests that the dissemination of a new image of place may not be sufficient for it to bring about change. Whilst there is a body of research that examines the way in which new images of place have become accommodated within broader place images (Bradley *et al*, 2002) there is, to date, little evidence to suggest the extent to which these new images can challenge popularly held images of place. There is, therefore a need to examine the



extent to which new images of place are successful in modifying people's perception of place.

### **7.3.2 The relationship between urban promoters and the national press**

Data generated by the interview stage of this thesis indicated that the bodies responsible for the management and promotion of Cheltenham's festivals had established a working relationship with members of the national press. This relationship allowed those responsible for the promotion and management of Cheltenham's festivals to exercise a degree of control over the content and style of the media reports that were subsequently produced as illustrated by the media management tactics employed by Cheltenham Racecourse. The nature and extent of this relationship and its potential for manipulating the images of place that are contained within the media, however, remains unexplored. This relationship has further significance when the importance of the media for the construction of images of place, as identified by this thesis, is considered. Whilst the current geographical literature recognises the importance of the local press as part of the growth coalition (Thomas, 1994), the extent to which the national press are exploited for the purposes of economic development by urban managers remains uninvestigated.

### **7.3.2 Examining the role of place image in the job application process from the perspective of the employee**

The results from this study indicated that there was a firm belief within the business community that being in a location that is perceived positively was a benefit in terms of attracting highly qualified employees to apply for positions within their company. This assertion, however, only examines one side of this process and neglects to examine the perception of place that exists within the mind of people for applying for positions within Cheltenham's business. Whilst there is a growing body of evidence that relates quality of life issues to business success (Johnson and Rasker, 1993; 1995; Bovaird, 1995; Rogerson, 1999), the influence of an area that is perceived to have a high quality of life can have on increasing the number of job applications is, at this time, purely speculation.

## **7.4 Recommendations for policy makers in relation to using the media coverage of festivals as a method of creating or maintaining images of place**

Three principal lessons emerge from the analysis of the media coverage of Cheltenham's festivals that would be of interest to policy makers and by prospective festival purchasers. These issues relate to the way in which festivals are sponsored, problems with the procurement of transitional events and the relationship between the type of festival and the amount and nature of coverage that it receives.

### **7.4.1 Recommendations for policy: Festivals and sponsorship**

The sponsorship of the Literature Festival by one national newspaper seems to have curtailed its coverage in that newspaper's competitors. Whilst this newspaper may have agreed a degree of exclusivity with festival organisers and therefore monopolised the access to participants in the festival, the opportunity to build further on Cheltenham's penetration of a wide variety of media through the coverage of its festivals was lost. The sponsorship and relation to corporate bodies of any kind of event is something that any organisation should consider carefully as recent history is full of sponsorship and association deals that have not had the desired effect. In the world of professional football, for instance, Vodafone's sponsorship of Manchester United in 2001 resulted in many of their products being returned (Islam, 2001), also Sugar Puffs were boycotted by many sections of North East England after the Sugar Puff's mascot was featured in advertising relating to Newcastle United (Chaudhary, 2000).

### **7.4.2 Recommendations for policy: The procurement of transitional events**

A lesson also needs to be heeded in relation to the procurement of transitional events, such as the Network Q Rally of Great Britain, with a view to using them as a mechanism to convey images of place to a wider audience. While Cheltenham's hosting of the Network Q Rally produced many newspaper articles, these rarely contained any images of the host location. Of the approximately twenty nine thousand words that were printed in relation to this festival, the word 'Cheltenham' only appeared forty one times. Therefore, the efficacy of enticing an event such as this to a location as a means of generating positive coverage needs to be called in question. This may, in part, however, be explained by the nature of the Network Q Rally, as whilst it was based in

Cheltenham with the drivers, teams and media personnel using it as a base, less than ten of the more than one thousand miles that the race covered took place within the town.

#### **7.4.3 Recommendations for policy: Relationship between festival type and coverage received**

There would also appear to be a relationship between the type of festival and the coverage pattern that it received across the six newspapers. Sports festivals appeared to obtain a broader coverage than their culture based counterparts. This is something that would need to be recognised by anyone contemplating using festivals as a means of image generation for a location, as the festival chosen would need to be covered by the medium that was most popular by your target audience in order to have the best possibility of achieving the desired market penetration. The timescale of the publication of articles in relation to festivals would also need to be considered as part of the policy of using festivals as a mechanism for image projection. The results from this study show that, in general, the majority of coverage takes place in the week preceding the festival and in the time period in which the festival takes place with the coverage quickly reducing in number and frequency once the festival has finished. Therefore, in order to maximise the efficacy of the use of festivals as a means of generating positive media coverage, the timescale of the festival may need to be co-ordinated with any other publicity events designed to attract media attention to a location in order to avoid any duplication.

#### **7.5 The key contribution to knowledge made by this thesis**

The existing literature on place marketing, the role of the media in the construction of images of place and the use of festivals as a sub-section of place marketing has suffered from a reliance on case studies drawn from large urban areas and upon the content and the socio-political environment in which place marketing has evolved. Whilst these studies are comprehensive, they tell us little or nothing about their relevance to the generation of locally focused economic development in smaller urban areas (Young and Lever, 1997; Bradley *et al*, 2002).

This study, therefore, makes a significant contribution to this literature as it identifies the images of place that are contained within the media coverage of festivals and events and contrasts this to the images of place that are constructed by the recipients of these

media images. It also identifies, for the first time, the resulting impacts that the dissemination of media images of place can have on local economic development.

In summary, the conclusions drawn from this thesis are:

- Festivals generate a far greater amount of media attention than would normally be received by small to medium sized urban areas, something which has been largely ignored in media studies, studies of place marketing and local economic development
- The media coverage of festivals produces a complex and contrasting image of place
- The image of place, as constructed by the media, has both positive and negative impacts on the economic development of place which are not easily explained by existing models.

This thesis adds substantially to the geographic understanding of the content, dissemination and impacts of the place marketing process in that it makes a contribution to knowledge, policy, method and theory. The contribution to geographic understanding in terms of knowledge generation is that it has expanded the current understanding to the place marketing experiences of a medium sized town. It has also made significant recommendations for policy makers in relation to the use of festivals as a mechanism to generate media images of place that can be disseminated to a far broader audience than that reached by conventional place marketing campaigns. The method used in this study is also significant as it not only analyses the images of place that are part of a marketing initiative but also the images of place that are constructed by a group of key economic actors as a result of the reception of these images. In terms of the generation of theory, this thesis has, for the first time, identified the positive and negative impacts that the production of place imagery, as part of a place marketing campaign, can have on a location. It has been argued that, "if ... the promotion of place imagery is pursued on such a large scale there should be an attempt to assess how important it is to economic decision makers and how effective it is in influencing people's perception of place" (Young and Lever, 1997, p.333). This thesis, then, draws upon the concerns of Young and Lever (1997), addresses the weaknesses identified within the academic literature, makes a significant contribution to knowledge and also suggests directions for research that can improve our knowledge in relation to the marketing of places in the future.

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## Appendix One: Sample Interview Schedule

### Interview schedule with *[insert name of interviewee and name of company here]*

Date, location and Time of interview:

Position and role within the company of interviewee:

Brief history of *[insert name of company in here]* in Cheltenham?

(Core) What do you believe the image of Cheltenham to be?

*Alt. How do you think Cheltenham is perceived?*

*Alt. How do you perceive Cheltenham?*

(Core) What factors are important in the construction of this image of Cheltenham?

*Alt. What means do you think are responsible for this portrayal of Cheltenham?*

(Core) Do you think that image that Cheltenham has is conducive to economic development? (*Possible prompts: attracting new businesses, attracting top quality staff etc.*)?

*Alt. Is Cheltenham's image a good one for your business?*

Is Cheltenham's image more conducive to economic development for certain types of businesses?

*Alt. Is the image of Cheltenham that you describe more helpful to certain businesses or types of businesses?*

(Core) Do you think that Cheltenham's festivals and events play an important role in helping to create and/or maintain an image of Cheltenham?

*Alt. There are a lot of festivals and events in Cheltenham, do you think they help to create the image of Cheltenham you referred to earlier?*

(Core) Do you believe that the media coverage that the festivals receive plays an important role in the creation/maintenance of Cheltenham's image?

*Alt. There are a lot of festivals and events in Cheltenham, do you think the media coverage they receive helps to create the image of Cheltenham you referred to earlier?*

**Do you use any images of Cheltenham in their recruitment or promotional material, if so what do they consist of?**

*Alt. In your own promotion material, do you use any images of Cheltenham, if so what are they?*

**What factors do you believe Cheltenham should promote to ensure satisfaction amongst existing businesses?**

*Alt. If you were put in charge of marketing Cheltenham how would you do it?*

**What barriers to economic development exist here?**

*Alt. What problems have you encountered in Cheltenham?*

*Productivity anecdotal evidence*

*\*\*\*\* remember to thank participants for their time!! \*\*\*\**

### **Prompts**

- Could you please elaborate on that issue/statement further?
- Can you give an example of that please?
- The point you raised in relation to .... could you please add any additional information?
- Was that the only reason?
- Are there any additional reasons why that should be so?