

Beyond Impacts | Lessons and legacies from
researching Liverpool's European Capital of Culture



Plenary Presentation

Impacts 08 Overview Background, Findings and Legacies

Dr Beatriz Garcia, Director



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The Impacts 08 research programme



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Background | a brief history of cultural policy research



- After over 25 years of discussion on the role of cultural policy as an area of investment and research, this term is dominating **government discourse**
- Cultural policy research was originally led by **consultancies and think tanks**, which informed a 'cultural turn' in public policy discourse, by exposing the links between culture, the economy and society at large (e.g. Policy Studies Institute 1980s; Comedia 1990s)
- In the last seven years, cultural policy is also becoming a distinct **academic discipline**, supported by refereed journals, conferences, monographs, special MAs, research centres, and Research Councils support
- At the heart of the cultural policy debate, we have a discourse on **urban regeneration** and culture as a catalyst for development (e.g. DCMS 2004, European Commission 2009)
- Since the turn of the millennium, there is also an emphasis on **impact research** a key driver for the centrality of cultural policy and regeneration discourses. This is linked to discussions on '**evidence-based policy making**', i.e. the belief that we can empirically prove how culture acts a catalyst for change in economic, social and environmental arenas
- **Current limitations** : short-termism, instrumentalism, imposing measures and frameworks that are not fully sensitive to local cultural environments; imposing (mainly quantitative) 'measures' over capturing (often intangible) value

Background | Liverpool 2008, the right time, the right place

- 2003-2010 | since Liverpool's nomination as ECoC, a key period in the advancement of the cultural policy and impact research debate
 - Widespread discussion on the need for '**longitudinal research**', reference to the notion of the '**creative class**', greater acceptance of **cultural planning** as a model
 - Generalisation of the term '**impact assessment**'
 - Emphasis on knowledge transfer and **knowledge exchange**
- Liverpool | seen as a relevant lab to test concepts and methodologies
 - As it had been the case with Glasgow 1990, at the time of a then emerging debate on the 'economic importance of the arts' (Myerscough 1988) local authorities saw Liverpool as the opportunity to test emerging approaches to impact research
 - Considerable investment into ambitious research programme – Impacts 08, combining quantitative indicator assessment with qualitative narrative assessment over 5 years.
- 2010 | discussion to establish a European-wide framework for assessment of cultural policy interventions, using the ECoC title as a case study



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Impacts 08 | Operational framework



- Commissioned by Liverpool City Council (2005-10)
- Overseen by the Cultural Research Steering Group
 - Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Culture Company
 - Northwest Culture Observatory (+ACE NW, NWDA)
- Managed by a joint university consortium
 - University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University
- Conducted by the Impacts 08 research team
 - Director + programme manager + programme assistant (3 posts, FT)
 - Over 20 project collaborators across universities, consultancies, data providers
- Complemented by parallel funding towards related projects
 - AHRC/ESRC Impact Fellowship (2007-2010)
 - AHRC/ACE Impact Workshops (2008)
 - University of Liverpool PhD Studentships (2005-2010)
 - European Commission, Cultural Policy Grouping (2010)

Impacts 08 | Research framework



- **Commissioned research** | Liverpool City Council + Liverpool Culture Company
 - First European Capital of Culture host city to commission a longitudinal research programme
 - First city to request provision of **evidence** of impact across the four main identified dimensions of regeneration : economic, physical, social and cultural
 - First city to appoint a University consortium to lead the assessment / evaluation
- **Academic inquiry** | University of Liverpool and LJMU
 - **Holistic** assessment of the city to understand **positive and negative impacts**
 - Theoretical framework
 - Interrogate **cultural impact** to understand wider economic, physical +social impacts
 - Contextualise the assessment of impact by assessing **processes**
 - Engage in the **methodological** debate | building on evidence to advance understanding
 - Attract parallel RCUK funding and support PhD studentships to test new methodologies
 - Aspire to establish a replicable **model** for research into culture-led regeneration
- **Knowledge Exchange** | Northwest Culture Observatory, cultural producers, ECoCs + EC



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Impacts 08 | Vision

- **Recognising the breath of areas of impact:**
 - developing a holistic model, with inter-related thematic clusters
- **Exploring processes as well as outcomes:**
 - contextualising impact data by assessing surrounding narratives
- **Understanding the challenges of impact disaggregation:**
 - placing the object of study in a wider context
 - acknowledging the effect of related initiatives
 - assessing lines of causality over time

Main objectives



- **Enhanced evidence base** for the multiple impacts of culture upon regeneration,
 - assisting local and regional cultural planning
 - informing the UK national debate.
- **Provision of intelligence to guide decision-making**
 - Liverpool ECoC delivery team;
 - other key stakeholders (eg. LARC)
- **Longitudinal impact analysis** of the Liverpool ECoC as delivered by a wide range of stakeholders, covering
 - pre-bid period (2000),
 - bidding and nomination (2002-2003),
 - event lead-up (2004-2007),
 - event year (2008)
 - and beyond (early 2009).
- **Replicable research framework**
 - exploring the impacts of culture-led regeneration beyond Liverpool and 2008

Impacts 08 | Main methodologies



- **Benchmark indicators**
 - Identification of clusters of key performance indicators for each 'theme'
 - Across the four dimensions of impact, from baselines in 2000 to 2010
- **Secondary data analysis**
 - Identifying, gathering and analysing relevant datasets, including:
 - In-house and external evaluations of specific elements of the ECoC programme
 - General local, regional and national data (tourism, economic, cultural development etc)
- **Contextual data collection and analysis**
 - Filling relevant data 'gaps' and explaining indicator and wider dataset mapping
 - Over 25 primary data projects, both qualitative and quantitative, covering local people's experiences of ECoC, visitors' perceptions, business, cultural and governance views and experiences, impacts on cultural engagement, quality of life, media impacts...
- **Continuous knowledge exchange with key partners**



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Impacts 08 | Thematic clusters



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Impacts 08 | Findings – impact clusters



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Impacts 08 | Main projects

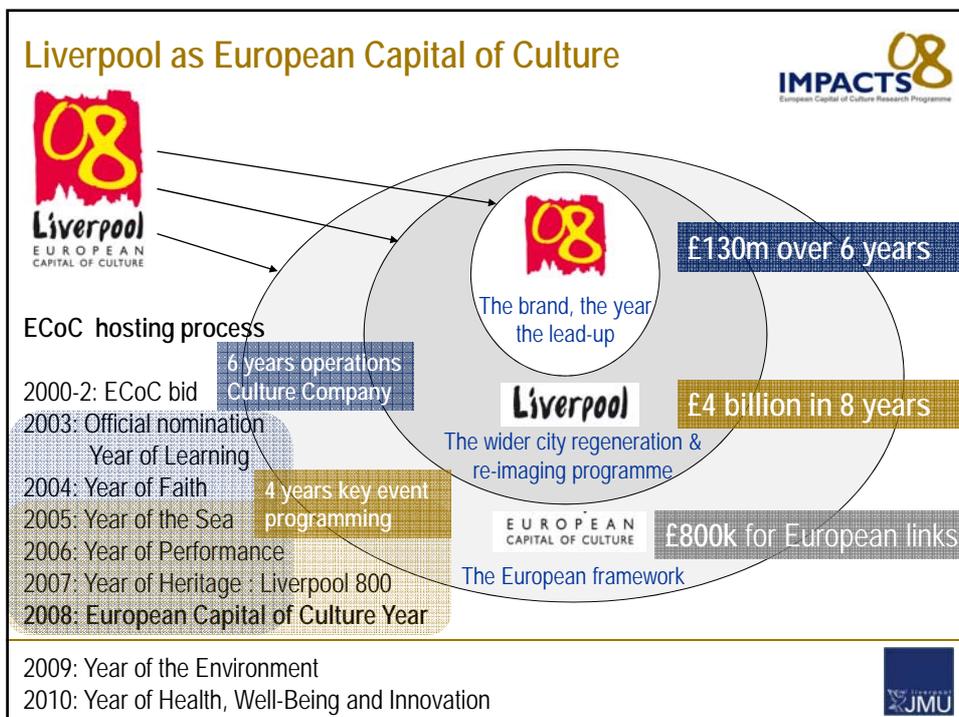
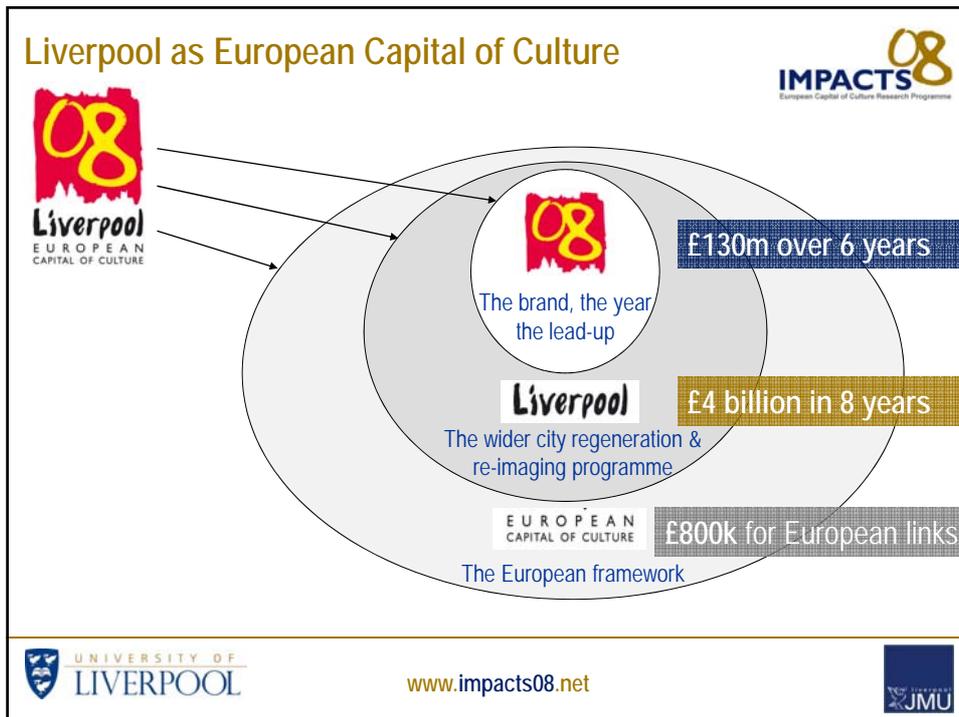


- Over 25 new primary data projects covering the following topics

Area	Project title	Research Period	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Indicators	Indicator data across all themes		x	x	x	x	x	
Economic growth	Business impact & engagement		x	x	x			
	Economic Impact of 08 Events		Parallel session: Cultural Economy Tamsin Cox					
	Impact of 08 on visitor numbers							
Cultural vibrancy	Creative industries sustainability				x	x		
	Arts Sector sustainability & Artists experience							
Access and participation	Local Area Studies - social impacts across city		Parallel session: Cultural Participation Ruth Melville					
	Impact of volunteering on cultural engagement							
	Impact of culture on Quality of Life toolkit							
Image & identity	AHRC/ACE Workshops quality of experiences							
	Media impact- press, broadcast, online		x	x	x	x		
	AHRC/ESRC- Impact on local identity		Parallel session: Cultural Narratives Beatriz Garcia					
World Class programme/event								
Physical impact	Experience of the public realm							
Management	Stakeholder interviews and observations		x	x	x	x		
The Liverpool Model	Overview of methods, key findings, recommendations Liverpool, other UK, other Europe, International Cultural strat, UK Cap Cult, ECoC, Expo, Olympics					x	x	

Liverpool as European Capital of Culture





Liverpool as European Capital of Culture

Intended impacts



Liverpool Culture Company Objectives

- To create and present the best of local, national and international **art and events** in all genres
- To build community enthusiasm, creativity and **participation**
- To maintain, enhance and grow the **cultural infrastructure** of Liverpool
- To **increase the levels of visitors** and inward investment in Liverpool
- To **reposition Liverpool** as a world class city by 2008

2008 European Capital of Culture Vision

- To positively **reposition Liverpool** to a national and international audience and to encourage more visitors to the city and the North West
- To encourage and **increase participation** in cultural activity by people from communities across Merseyside and the wider region
- To create a **legacy of long term growth and sustainability** in the city's cultural sector
- To develop greater **recognition nationally and internationally for the role of arts and culture** in making our cities better places to live, work and visit



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Liverpool as European Capital of Culture

Intended impacts

cultural vibrancy | participation | image



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Liverpool as European Capital of Culture | Activity



- The Liverpool ECoC Programme had a total income of **£130million** over six years, the highest of any European Capital of Culture to date.
- Over four themed years (2005-2008)
 - 41,000+ events and related activity, including:
 - 276 key events
 - 21,000 performance days and exhibition days
 - 20,000 workshops and training sessions
 - Resulting in
 - A total audience of 18m
 - 1000 active volunteers, giving 7,000 days of volunteering
- In 2008 alone
 - 7,000+ activities
 - An audience of 9.8m
 - 80% of audiences who thought the events were 'good' or 'very good'



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The findings | main areas of impact



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Findings | Cultural access and participation



Findings | Cultural access and participation

European Capital of Culture Research Programme

- The ECoC programme was geographically and socio-economically inclusive:
 - **Geographically:** as in 2008, one third of the audience was local, one sixth from beyond the region, and nearly 5% international.
 - **Socially:** as in 2008, the audience socio-economic profile largely matched the city's profile.
- Volunteers and other programme participants reported a range of social and cultural outcomes
 - E.g. social interaction, the chance to welcome overseas visitors to their city and the satisfaction of promoting Liverpool's culture and heritage.
- During the period 2006-2008 considerably wider cultural engagement occurred in both Liverpool and the North West region, including:
 - A 10% rise each year in arts audiences across Liverpool
 - Higher levels of interest in going to museums and galleries in Liverpool than elsewhere in the UK
 - A drop in the proportion of people in Liverpool who claimed to have no interest in culture
 - A 50% rise in visitor figures to Merseyside's seven largest attractions since 2004, peaking at 5.5m people in 2008
- By the end of 2008,
 - 60% of Liverpool residents engaged in at least one ECoC branded event
 - 11.6% of Liverpool residents felt they had 'tried something new' in 2008
 - 60% of North West residents considered that there were more cultural activities and opportunities in the region than previously

Findings | Economy and tourism



Findings | Economy and tourism

European Capital of Culture Research Programme

- *Visiting Liverpool European Capital of Culture*
 - The Liverpool European Capital of Culture (ECoC) attracted **9.7m additional visits to Liverpool**, constituting **35% of all visits** to the city in 2008
 - These visits generated an **economic impact of £753.8m** (additional direct visitor spend) across Liverpool, Merseyside and the wider North West region.
 - **2.6m European and global visits** were motivated by the Liverpool ECoC in 2008.
 - **97%** of these were **first-time visits** to the city.
 - The ECoC generated an additional **1.14m staying visitor nights in Liverpool hotels**, 1.29m in the rest of Merseyside and 1.7m in the rest of the North West.
- *Overall Tourism trends in 2008*
 - In 2008 there were an estimated **27.7m visits to Liverpool**, a 34% rise on 2007; and **75.1m visits to Merseyside**, a 19% rise on 2007.
 - This increase was proportionally much greater than in other cities.
 - Merseyside saw a 20% rise in day visits between 2007 and 2008, in comparison to rises of between 1 and 4% in other areas of the North West;
 - Merseyside also saw a 4% rise in staying visits over the same period, in comparison with a 7% drop in Greater Manchester.

Findings | Cultural vibrancy and sustainability



Findings | Cultural vibrancy and sustainability

- Since ECoC nomination in 2003,
 - National and local media coverage on Liverpool's cultural offer has more than doubled
 - In 2008, positive stories on the city's cultural assets dominated over (negative) social issues.
 - Liverpool culture stories have diversified from traditional focus on popular music and built heritage to the visual and performing arts, and growing references to its creative industries.
 - The city's cultural sector has developed **strong networks**, which have secured multimillion pound national grants. These include: Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium and Small and Medium Arts Collective, in addition to the pre-existing Arts and Culture Network.
- By the end of 2008,
 - The arts sector viewed the Liverpool ECoC as a success in terms of raising the profile of the city and its cultural offer, and in bringing visitors and the local population in to enjoy its offer.
 - The creative industries sector felt : Liverpool ECoC improved city profile; improved sector 'local morale' and increased its credibility within city region.
 - 51% of local peers agree that Liverpool has been repositioned as a '**world class city**'.
 - At least 15 of Liverpool ECoC highlights judged to be 'world class' or 'excellent' by local peers
 - There were 1,683 creative industry enterprises in Liverpool employing 11,000 people. This represents a growth of 8% in the number of enterprises since 2004.
 - Total **audience** among the largest arts and cultural organisations in the city topped **5.6m**.

Findings | Image and perceptions



Findings | Image and perceptions

- Liverpool's media representation has become less polarised since the mid 1990s.
 - Contrast between negative social stories and positive city icon stories replaced by more nuanced stories on contemporary cultural offer and economic change.
- **Press media**
 - Liverpool ECoC stories overwhelmingly positive since bid stage, peaking in 2003 (74%)
 - ECoC events received over 90% positive or neutral coverage throughout this period
 - National positive stories on Liverpool as a city grew by 71% between 2007 and 2008
 - Growth in local positive city coverage since 2003, negative coverage at its lowest in 2008.
- **Online media**
 - The Liverpool ECoC was strongly reflected in user-led social media spaces throughout 2008:
 - *flickr* (50,000 Liverpool ECoC tagged photographs were uploaded by event audiences)
 - *YouTube* (2,200 video clips generating over 2.5m views)
 - *Facebook* (500 new group pages on Liverpool ECoC events with over 13,000 members)
 - *Google* (volume of Liverpool ECoC related searches comparable to football searches)
- **People's Awareness and Perceptions**
 - 2005 to 2008 | growth in positive impressions of Liverpool and drop in negative views across UK
 - By end of 2008 | 65% of UK residents aware that Liverpool was European Capital of Culture
 - 77% of visitors to Liverpool felt the city was 'safer than I expected'.
 - 99% of visitors liked the 'general atmosphere' and 97% the 'feeling of welcome'
 - 68% of UK businesses believed the ECoC had a positive impact on Liverpool's image

Findings | Governance and delivery process



Findings | Governance and delivery process

- Liverpool's approach to ECoC governance was the result of **extensive partnership** across public, private and third sectors.
 - This has contributed to the repositioning of culture as more central to cross-sectoral agendas, and is reflected in a new city-wide cultural strategy for 2008 to 2013.
- The Liverpool ECoC generated the **highest amount of sponsorship and earned income** of any ECoC, with a total of £24million of sponsorship (both cash and in kind) and £4million of earned income.
- By the end of 2008,
 - Liverpool ECoC stakeholders agreed that the year was seen as a success, that it had **added value to existing regeneration programmes** and that there was great potential associated with the its legacy.
 - Liverpool residents showed much higher levels of agreement with the claim that the **city was a better place than before the ECoC award** (85%, a 20% rise on 2007).
 - Up to 78% of North West residents agreed that Liverpool had 'benefited' or 'benefited a great deal' from hosting the ECoC.
 - Internationally, the Liverpool ECoC is perceived as a **relevant reference point for future ECoC hosts** and is presented as an exemplar by the European Commission in areas such as its volunteering, community involvement and research programmes.

Conclusions



Conclusions | Immediate ECoC outputs



- The Liverpool ECoC presented a wide range of events showcasing the wealth of local talent as well as national and internationally acclaimed work;
 - It reached a significant variety of audiences, ensuring local engagement across socio-economic groups
 - It achieved very high satisfaction levels, particularly during 2008 itself.
- The city has undergone a remarkable local, national and international image renaissance
 - **local** opinion leaders give more credibility to the city's cultural sector as a source of civic leadership;
 - **national** media present a richer picture of Liverpool as a multi-faceted and contemporary city with world class assets and an ability to build on them;
 - **internationally**, the city has been rediscovered as a tourist destination beyond football and the Beatles, and its approach to ECoC delivery is held as a key reference by other European cities.
- Levels of confidence have been raised across the city, particularly in culture and tourism.
 - Strong partnerships developed, continuing post 2008
 - These may bring greater opportunities to produce, retain and attract talent, attract external investment and further develop the range and quality of the city's offer.
- Culture is more widely accepted as a driver for economic change, health and social inclusion.
 - The cultural sector took the opportunity to play a larger role in the city's leadership in the lead up to 2008,
 - In 2010, there is ongoing commitment to ensure that the sector continues to contribute in areas as diverse as community safety, tourism development, health or city centre management.

Conclusions | Wider context and challenges



- Expectation management
- Building on crisis points as catalysts for change
- Understanding timeframes
- The European dimension



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Impacts 08 reports

Programme overview

- Impacts 08 Baseline Findings 2006-2007 (2007)
- Impacts 08: Methodological framework (2010)
- [Final Report] Creating an Impact (2010)

Cultural Access and Participation

- Volunteering for Culture (2010)
- Neighbourhood Watch (2010)
- Impacts of Culture on Quality of Life (2010)

Cultural Vibrancy and Sustainability

- Liverpool's Creative Industries (2009)
- Liverpool's Arts Sector (2009)

Image and Perceptions

- Media Impact Assessment (Part I) (2006)
- Re-telling the City: exploring local narratives (2007)
- Liverpool 08 Centre of the Online Universe (2009)
- The Look of the City (2010)
- Media Impact Assessment (Part II) (2010)

Economy and Tourism

- Doing Business in the ECoC (Part I): (2007)
- Doing Business in the ECoC (Part II): (2008)
- ECoC and Liverpool's Developer Market: (2008)
- Tourism and the Business of Culture (2010)
- Economic Impact of Visits Influenced by the ECoC

Economy & tourism background papers

- Estimating Economic Benefits of Event Tourism
- Economic Impacts of the Liverpool ECoC (2008)
- Methodology for Measuring the Economic Impact of Visits Influenced by the Liverpool ECoC (2009)

Governance and Delivery Process

- Who Pays the Piper? (2008)
- Liverpool on the map again (2010)

All reports available at:
www.impact08.net

Thank you

to our partners and collaborators
across academia, policy and industry circles
locally, UK-wide and internationally

for their time and dedication over five years
and their commitment to future developments



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Latest news:
Our Measuring Cultural Engagement workshop, held at Liverpool's Forefront Centre on 27th July, was a great success. Download the presentations, see who was there and contribute to the ongoing debate. [More news >>](#)

Impacts08@liverpool.ac.uk
Phone: +44 (0)151 794 2988
Fax: +44 (0)151 794 2997

Impacts 08
University of Liverpool
Eleanor Rathbone Building
Bedford Street South
Liverpool L69 7ZA

Impacts 08 is a joint research initiative of the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University, which evaluates the social, cultural, economic and environmental effects of Liverpool's hosting the European Capital of Culture title in 2008.

Since 2005 our research programme, commissioned by Liverpool City Council, has been examining the progress and impact of this experience on the city and its people. Our aim is to develop a model for evaluating the multiple impacts of culture-led regeneration programmes that can be applied to events across the UK and internationally.

Above: Liverpool 08 banners at the Walker Art Gallery by B. Garcia

Thank you

Beatriz Garcia
Ruth Melville
Tamsin Cox

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