Researching the impact and legacy of a European Capital of Culture

The Liverpool experience

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Impacts 08 – The Liverpool Model
European Capital of Culture Research Programme

Palmer / Rae study on ECoC programme (1995-2004), key warnings:
- Lack of contemporary and retrospective data, poor quality assessments
- It is not possible to compare experiences nor fully understand legacies

Glasgow 1990: first city to actively engage in ECoC assessment
- 2002-2005: Long term cultural legacy (Garcia, University of Glasgow)

Liverpool 2008: first city to commission a longitudinal research programme
- 2005-2010: Economic, physical, social and cultural impacts (Garcia, University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University)

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

- **2003-2010** | since Liverpool’s nomination as ECoC, a key period in the advancement of cultural policy and impact research throughout Europe
  - Key terms | culture as tool for development, creative cities, creative class, creative economy
  - Acceptance of integrated **cultural planning** as an urban policy model
  - Widespread discussion on the need for ‘**longitudinal research**’
  - Generalisation of the term ‘**impact assessment**’
  - Emphasis on knowledge transfer and **knowledge exchange**

- **Ongoing research challenges**
  - **short-termism, instrumentalism**, imposing frameworks not fully sensitive to local cultural environments; imposing quantitative ‘measures’ over capturing intangible value

- **Liverpool** | seen as a relevant laboratory to test concepts and methodologies
  - First ECoC host city to commission a longitudinal research programme (**2005-2010**)  
  - Requesting evidence of impact across four regeneration dimensions (**holistic frame**)  
  - Appointment of University consortium to lead the research (**critical assessment**)  

- **European Commission** | funding towards cultural policy groupings (**2009-10**)  
  - Using the ECoC title as a case study to test comparable methodologies

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Impacts 08 | **Research framework**

- **Self-reflective**: analyses process as well as outcome
- **Holistic**: multiple dimensions of impact; positive as well as negative
- **Collaborative**: Research & Arts Councils match funding, data sharing univ/ gov / industry

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Liverpool as European Capital of Culture

ECoC hosting process
2000-2: ECoC bid
2003: Official nomination
2004: Year of Faith
2005: Year of the Sea
2006: Year of Performance
2007: Year of Heritage: Liverpool 800
2008: European Capital of Culture Year

The brand, the year, the lead-up
Liverpool
The wider city regeneration & re-imaging programme

£130m over 6 years
£4 billion in 8 years
£800k for European links

2009: Year of the Environment
2010: Year of Health, Well-Being and Innovation
Liverpool as European Capital of Culture

Intended impacts & legacies

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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The findings | main areas of impact

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Findings | Economy and tourism

9.7m additional visits

£754m direct spend in Liverpool + region

34% growth in visitors since 2007

2.6m international visitors (97% of them visit first time)

1.14m additional hotels nights in Liverpool, plus 3m in the North West region
Findings | Cultural access and participation

Three pavilions in deprived communities owned by neighbours and praised by critics

Above average ethnic minorities, lower socio-eco groups and young people attend ECoC events

60% of residents attend at least one ECoC event

15m visits to events or attractions in 2008

Growth in cultural engagement (2006-2008)
- 10% yearly rise in arts audiences (2006-2008)
- 50% rise in visitors to sub-region’s largest attractions
- Drop in % of people who claim to have no interest in culture

Over 4,000 registered volunteers, 1,000 active

Findings | Cultural vibrancy and sustainability

New local cultural networks attracting multi-million national grants

From mid 1990s to end of 2008, 211% growth in culture stories

over 70% of ECoC contributors locally based

8% growth in creative industry enterprises since 2004

Greater awareness of Liverpool’s contemporary cultural offer, beyond football and Beatles

51% of local peers agree that Liverpool has been repositioned as a ‘world class city’
Findings | Image and perceptions

Less polarised media representation. From 1990s fixed negative & positive extremes into nuanced stories on diverse contemporary issues.

Over 85% of national articles on ECoC events are positive or neutral.

ECoC stimulates wider use of online social media platforms offering alternative narratives.

In 2008, cultural stories dominate national media, outnumbering social/crime related stories.

71% more national positive stories on Liverpool as a city between 2007 and 2008.

Findings | Governance and delivery process

Highest amount of sponsorship (£24m) and earned income (£4m).

85% residents agree that city is a better place in 2009 than before ECoC.

International ECoC peers view Liverpool as a reference point for community involvement and research strategy.

New collective cultural strategy for city-region.

Business stakeholders agree that the ECoC has added value to existing regeneration programmes.

New approaches to joint cross sectoral thinking have emerged.
Summary | Immediate ECoC impacts

- The Liverpool ECoC presented a **geographically and socially inclusive programme**,
  - It reached a significant variety of audiences, ensuring local engagement across socio-eco 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 cultural sector as a source of civic leadership;
  - **National** media present a richer picture of Liverpool as a multi-faceted city with world class assets;
  - **Internationally**, Liverpool 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 and social inclusion**
  - The cultural sector played 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.

Summary | Wider context and challenges

- Expectation management
- Building on crisis points as catalysts for change
- Understanding timeframes
- Assessing the ‘European dimension’
## Programme overview
- Impacts 08: Methodological framework (2010)


## Impacts 08 reports

### Economy and Tourism
- 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
- Liverpool on the map again (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
- Re-telling the City: exploring local narratives (2007)
- Liverpool 08 Centre of the Online Universe (2008)
- The Look of the City (2010)

### All reports available at:
www.impacts08.net

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## Ways forward | Lessons for impact research
Conclusions | Establishing a model for research

- The need to conduct longitudinal research to understand impacts
  - A five year programme leading up to and during the event
  - However, the most important legacies are likely to emerge over a five to ten year period

- Combining quantitative and qualitative techniques
  - Statistics help capture representative data / follow trends over time / benchmarking
  - In-depth qualitative research allows locally sensitive value assessments

- Establishing a collaboration across research sectors and nation states
  - Universities working alongside data agencies
  - Combining independent academic research
  - Diversifying funding for research: from commissioners as well as research councils

- The involvement of universities strengthens the legacy of hosting the ECoC

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Points for discussion

- Culture can be a key catalyst for local development and regeneration

- Emerging evidence in Liverpool shows that key drivers result from applying cultural incentives and investment within economic, social, physical as well as cultural/artistic/creative policy agendas

- A key challenge to culture-led regeneration is the risk to take culture out of context and instrumentalise it for economic or social ends without attending to geographical, temporal and local identity sensibilities

- To maximise its potential and sustainability, we need to keep advancing our understanding of synergies as well as potential conflict between cultural, economic and social imperatives

- This requires more support to assessment tools that acknowledge the multiple dimensions of regeneration (thematic, qualitative and quantitative methods) and its progression over time (longitudinal research)
Thank you

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