



**Event-led strategy for cultural tourism  
development: The case of Liverpool as the  
2008 European Capital of Culture**

**Yi-De Liu**

**Graduate Institute of European Cultures & Tourism  
National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan**



## **1. Research Context**

- **Cultural tourism & urban development**
- **Cultural tourism & European cities**
- **Event, European Capital of Culture (ECOC) and tourism**
- **A case study of Liverpool – 2008 ECOC**
- **Aim & Research questions:**
  - **Identifying the key factors of event-led cultural tourism strategies; and**
  - **Exploring Liverpool's successes and challenges.**



**EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF CULTURE**



## 2. Research Methods

- **Primary data: interviews with 9 informants in 2014**
  - 1) **Project Director, Museum of Liverpool**
  - 2) **Director of Marketing, National Museums of Liverpool**
  - 3) **Head of Communications, Tate Liverpool**
  - 4) **Managing Director, Beatles Story**
  - 5) **World Heritage Officer, Liverpool City Council**
  - 6) **Educational Officer, Liverpool Cathedral**
  - 7) **Consultant, Albert Dock Marketing**
  - 8) **Visitor Service Manager, FACT**
  - 9) **Creative Enterprise Manager, Bluecoat**



## 2. Research Methods

- **Secondary data: 'Impacts 08' reports and academic publications**
- **Analytical framework: 5 dimensions**
  - 1) **Visitor economy**
  - 2) **City image**
  - 3) **Urban regeneration**
  - 4) **Cultural provision**
  - 5) **Partnerships**





### 3. Visitor Economy

- **Visitor economy: multiplier effect**
- **Event does not necessarily lead to a long-term increase in visitors**
- **Liverpool: £130 million and over 8 themed years**
- **£754 million additional direct visitor spend and 10 million additional visits AND substantial additional and first-time visits**
- **Key determinant of success: a planning that extends well beyond the actual year of the ECOC**



### ECoC hosting process

- 2000-2: ECoC bid
- 2003: Official nomination
- Year of Learning
- 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**

6 years operations  
Culture Company

4 years key event  
programming



£130m over 6 years

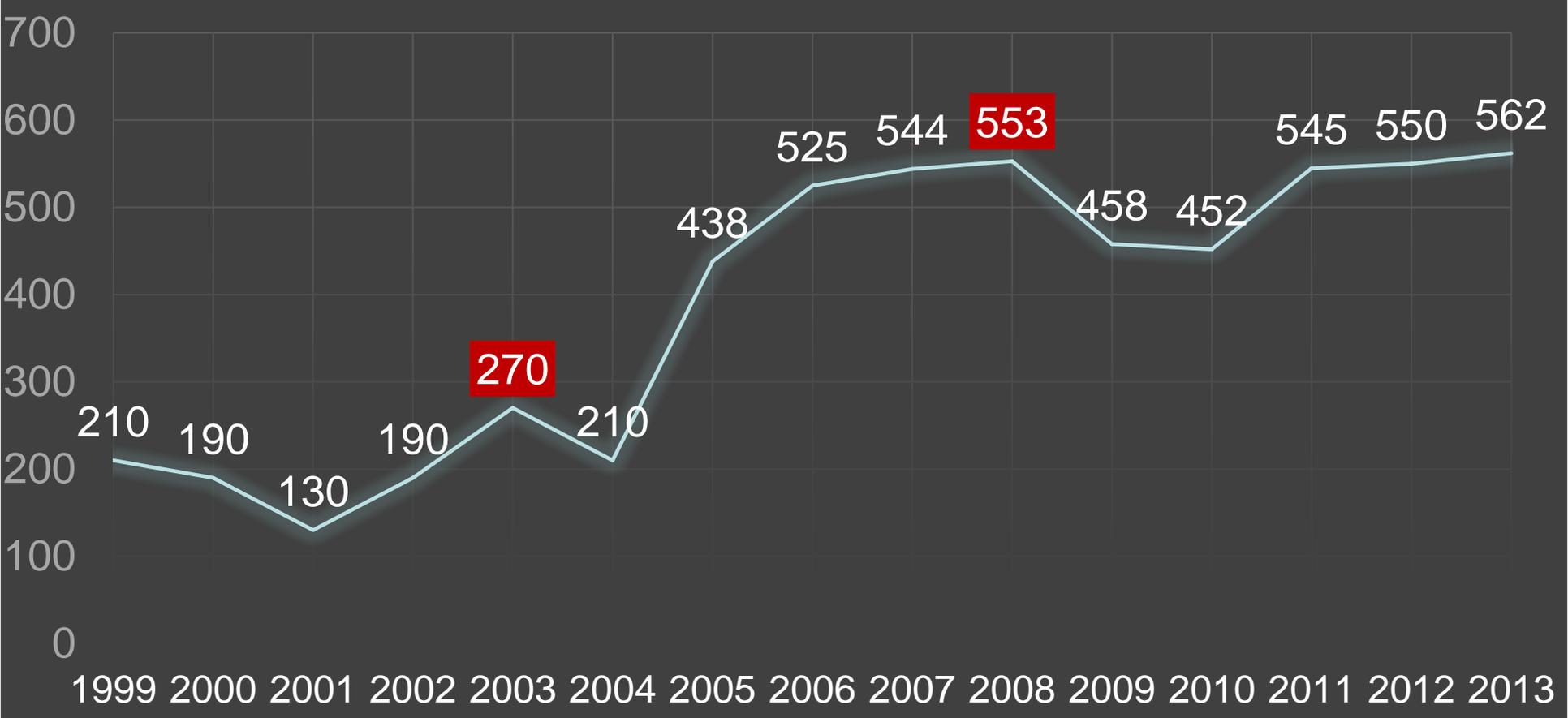
£4 billion in 8 years

£800k for European links

- 2009: Year of the Environment
- 2010: Year of Health, Well-Being and Innovation



— Overseas visitors (000s)





## 4. City Image

- **Liverpool**: ECOC = city reimagining and rebranding
- Liverpool Culture Company strived to reconstruct the image of Liverpool. The Liverpool 08 brand was created to give the city a new cultural image
- **Visitors**: city was safer than expected (77%), liked the 'general atmosphere' (99%) and 'feeling of welcome' (97%)
- **Media**: Press reporting less negative (50% in 1990s to 33% in 2008)



## 4. City Image

- “strengthen the profile of the city and its arts and cultural offer” (*World Heritage Officer*)
- “replace formerly negative coverage by a much more nuanced view of the city” (*Museum of Liverpool*)
- “show that Liverpool has more than just the Beatles” (*Tate Liverpool*)



## 5. Urban Regeneration

- **Event-led regeneration: stimulating physical redevelopment, adding animation to the city and generating economic and cultural benefits**
- **Liverpool: ECOC = catalyst for further public and private investments**
- **Suspicion: ‘Liverpool ECOC had added value to, but not driven regeneration programmers’ (*Bluecoat*)**



**Echo Arena**



**Liverpool ONE**



**Museum of Liverpool**



**Cruise Liner Terminal**



## 6. Cultural Provision

- **Liverpool:** improving city's cultural provision
- **Increased funding:** by 84% between 2003 and 2008
- **Over 50 organisations received this funding during the six-year period, with 27 receiving a three-year funding agreement**
- **Significant infrastructural investment in 2009 and 2010.**



大師大

## 6. Cultural Provision

- “enhancing the quality of artistic programmes” (*Tate Liverpool*)
- “undertaking new commissions and projects” (*Liverpool Cathedral*)
- “additional programme funding” (*National Museums of Liverpool*)
- “the opportunity to work with internationally significant artists” (*Bluecoat*)
- **Challenges:** sustainability of cultural impacts after ECOC



## **7. Partnerships**

- **A key aspect of cultural tourism development is to build effective partnerships**
- **Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC): provide part of the cultural programmes for 2008 and influencing city's cultural policy agenda**
- **Meet every month and gained almost £6 million of investment collectively since 2005**
- **Developing its position as a leading organisation in shaping the cultural agenda of Liverpool**



Liverpool's creative hub  
**at the Bluecoat.**



Liverpool  
Arts  
Regeneration  
Consortium



National Museums Liverpool  
National Museums Liverpool  
National Museums Liverpool

National  
Museums  
Liverpool

**FACT**<sup>0</sup>  
FOUNDATION FOR ART AND  
CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY

LIVERPOOL  
**TATE**

**EVERYMAN**  
L I V E R P O O L  
**PLAYHOUSE**

 LIVERPOOL  
PHILHARMONIC

**unity**theatre

  
liverpool biennial



## **8. Conclusion**

- **Staging a series of events to convince visitors that there is always something happening in the city.**
- **Event's impact and sustainability is greater when regeneration initiatives are integrated into a total urban development strategy.**
- **Sustaining the image beyond a major event requires continued promotion and strategic marketing initiatives.**
- **Event can contribute to the improvement cultural provision and to stimulate collaboration and network.**