Revisiting the impact of Liverpool as ECoC 2008. The lost opportunity to reconcile cultural policy and evaluation

Abstract

Purpose	In this paper, the authors reflect critically on their experience as researchers ~~on~~ of the *Impacts 18* programme: a re-study concerned with the long-term effects of Liverpool European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2008. Situating *Impacts 18* at the confluence of three important debates within the cultural policy field, the paper considers the causation, nature and significance of the shortcomings of the research, with a view to advancing cultural evaluation practices and encouraging re-studies in a field where they are seldom used.
Design / methodology / approach	The authors draw on documentary analysis of unpublished research outputs, along with their own research notes and critical reflections. The paper focuses on two projects from the *Impacts 18* programme, in particular, in order to illustrate the broader issues raised in terms of the epistemological framing, methodological design and execution of the *Impacts 18* research.
Findings	The paper highlights and explores the various issues that affected *Impacts 18* in terms of its epistemological framing and methodological design, as well as problems encountered in terms of data management and stakeholder relationships.
Originality	As a ~~large scale~~large-scale re-study of a cultural event, *Impacts 18* represents an exceedingly rare occurrence, despite the acknowledged dearth of evidence on the longer-term impacts of such events. Similarly unusual, however, are critical and candid retrospectives from research authors themselves. The paper is thus doubly unusual, in these two respects, and should help to advance research practice in an under-researched area.

Keywords (up to 12): European Capital of Culture, Cultural Value, Evaluation, Mega-events, Revisiting, Restudies, Data Reuse, Cultural policy, Long-term Impact, Liverpool

1. Introduction

Restudies, the revisiting of past studies and the reuse of data are not uncommon in anthropology and sociology (Bishop & Kuula-Luumi, 2017; O'Connor & Goodwin, 2010; Hammersley, 2010). By contrast, the revisiting of event evaluations by researchers in the cultural policy field is far less common – or even non-existent – despite the increasing instrumentalisation of events by cities in recent decades (Richards & Palmer, 2010); and despite specific high-profile cultural events often claiming positive, but essentially unverified long-term impacts (Németh, 2016). This much is true of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) programme, where despite the generally accepted narratives of success around various ECoC host cities, there has remained little to no empirical research on the longer-term impacts of events – with most of the available evidence produced by ECoC evaluation still tending to relate to the immediate outputs and short-term impacts of event years (Bianchini, Albano, & Bollo, 2013; Garcia, & Cox, 2013) ~~(Garcia & Cox, 2013)~~.

In this article, the authors critically reflect on their experience as researchers on *Impacts 18* – an academic programme of research which, in looking to capture the long-term impacts of the Liverpool ECoC, sought notably to address this evidence gap. Winning praise for its reportedly overwhelming short-term impacts, the Liverpool ECoC continues to represent for some the 'ideal type' of a culture-led regeneration event – with the 'Liverpool model' (Garcia, Cox, & Melville, 2010) inspiring the creation of the UK City of Culture programme (DCMS, 2013), the London and Liverpool Boroughs of Culture, and indeed other ECoC host cities. Yet, with the original evaluation of the Liverpool ECoC unable to extend data collection appreciably beyond the event year itself in many cases, this was a reputation that was burnished, in part, it must be said, in the absence of any real evidence to substantiate widely held perceptions of long-lasting impact.

Impacts 18 was conceived in some ways as an 'extension' of *Impacts 08*, the original monitoring and evaluation programme of the Liverpool ECoC.[1] On the one hand, the research sought consistency with *Impacts 08* by utilising pre-existing data, where possible, and by replicating, as closely as possible, the methodological and thematic frameworks devised for the original evaluation. However, the research also involved the collection and analysis of significant volumes of *new* data, utilising a diverse range of primary and secondary data sources and applying several new methodologies. The overall methodology underpinning the *Impacts 18* research programme ~~therefore~~, therefore, defied straightforward typological categorisation as a 'revisitation' study (see, e.g., O'Connor & Goodwin, 2010), in that it consisted not of one mode of revisitation but rather a mixture of data re-use, re-study and replication. Using a combination of documentary analysis and critical retrospection rooted in the authors' own research practice, this paper focuses on two research projects from the *Impacts 18* programme, in order to illustrate its broader shortcomings as a re-study and the specific challenges that were confronted by the authors. In so doing, the paper interfaces with and contributes to three salient and interrelated scholarly debates: firstly, on the important interdependencies between epistemology

[1] The evaluation of the Liverpool ECoC was undertaken by *Impacts 08* – a partnership between Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Liverpool that was commissioned by Liverpool City Council and ran for five years between 2005 and 2010.

and methodology in approaches to defining, capturing and evidencing ‘cultural value’ (Walmsley, 2012; O’Brien, 2014; Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016; Baker, Bull, & Taylor, 2018; Belfiore, 2016, 2020); secondly, on the long-standing tension within cultural policy between critical and advocacy-driven research (Bennett, 2004; Baker, Bull, & Taylor, 2018); and thirdly, on the most appropriate methodological approaches to revisiting and re-analysing research on cultural mega-events (O'Connor & Goodwin, 2010; O'Connor & Goodwin, 2012; Burawoy, 2003). Outside of a purely academic context, the paper also illustrates the sites of uncertainty and contestation ‘behind the scenes’ of mega-event evaluation that can be obscured by official narratives and the dominant paradigm for event evaluation – even in the case of cities regarded as exemplars of best practice.

The remainder of the paper is structured into four parts. In the first part, we review the relevant literature, situating *Impacts 18* at the intersection of the three key debates highlighted above. In the second section of the paper, we outline the origins and methodological design of the broader *Impacts 18* programme, and indeed of this paper as a critical retrospective on that body of work. Based on the authors’ experience on two research projects in particular, the third section of the paper considers the various issues raised by *Impacts 18* as a re-study in terms of its epistemological framing, methodological design, data management, and stakeholder relationship management; whilst the fourth and final section reflects on the implications of the paper for the three aforementioned scholarly debates.

2. Literature review

Impacts 18 was a study insufficiently rooted in the literature and theory that would otherwise have provided a much-needed intellectual framework to the research. As we explore more fully elsewhere in this paper, this was a vulnerability that would have seriously deleterious effects on the explanatory power of the research programme overall. Nevertheless, *Impacts 18* was still unavoidably reflective of these various, interwoven academic debates – a product of its own intellectual environment, whether it acknowledged it or not. Furthermore, it is the contention of this paper that the *Impacts 18* case study can make a valuable contribution to these debates – not despite but *because* of the shortcomings that we catalogue and interrogate in this paper. Accordingly, in this section, we briefly review three key debates within the scholarly literature, in order to contextualise *Impacts 18* and frame the analysis we present in this paper.

The ‘cultural value’ debate

Evaluating culture and ‘measuring cultural value’ (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016; O’Brien, 2010; Walmsley, 2012; Belfiore, 2009) is perhaps the core debate of cultural policy. The evaluation of arts and cultural events grew from the pressure to evidence their instrumental value (Holden, 2004), in a context in which public investment in arts and culture is in direct competition with government expenditure on other areas (Scott, 2010; Belfiore and Bennett, 2008). In recent decades, the intrinsic, instrumental and institutional values of culture (Holden, 2004) have all been extensively debated. This is as true of the economic sphere, where discourse has focused on the relationship between culture and the creative industries, urban regeneration and tourism (Cudny, Comunian, & Wolaniukc, 2020; Liu, 2019; Smith, 2012; Jones & Ponzini, 2018), as it is the social sphere, where research has focused on the role of culture in

terms of education, health and social inclusion (Wallstam, Ioannides, and Pettersson 2020; Wise, 2019; Steiner, Frey, & Hotz, 2015; Oman & Taylor, 2018; Lähdesmäki, 2012; West & Scott-Samuel, 2010; Liu, 2017). Also well developed is the literature on the benefits of culture for the individual – whether in terms of civic participation, wellbeing, or aesthetic fruition (Jancovich & Hansen, 2018; Walmsley, 2018; Taylor, 2016; Hadley & Belfiore, 2018; Biondi, et al., 2020). In their objective to capture the effects of the Liverpool ECoC at different scales and across different thematic areas, *Impacts 08* and *Impacts 18* clearly represent a part of this wider discourse on cultural value.

The tension between critical and advocacy-driven research

Another defining feature of the cultural policy field – and of cultural evaluation in particular – is the longstanding and widely acknowledged tension between critical and advocacy-driven research (Bennett, 2004; Baker, Bull, & Taylor, 2018). This tension can be seen to stem from the nature of cultural evaluation as a social practice pervaded by conflicting logics and impulses. On the one hand, evaluation practice, and in particular the sociology of evaluation (Lamont, 2012; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Hennion, 2004), is reflective of the methodological and intellectual heritage of social science; in other words, the concepts, paradigms, theories, and methods that shape how reality is conceived, interrogated, captured and interpreted by researchers. On the other hand, this form of applied social research operates at the frontier between academia and policymaking, where it is expected to provide empirical evidence to inform decision-making, yet in political contexts that (more often than not) will feature conflicting stakeholders and competing agendas (Burawoy, 2005; Charles, 2004; Kalleberg, 2005; Nielsen, 2004).

This tension can create ethical dilemmas for researchers, in practice; in particular, when policymakers expect cultural evaluation simply to validate pre-defined policies, resulting in 'policy-led evidence' rather than 'evidence-led policy' (Campbell, Cox, & O'Brien, 2017). Yet, for scholars critical of advocacy-driven research, there are also broader epistemological downsides to unduly 'sunny' cultural evaluations (Belfiore, 2016). As Ooi, Håkanson, & LaCava (2014, p. 423) point out, the myths of success perpetuated by advocacy-driven research risk creating a 'discrepancy between early promises and actual effects'. Consequently, for some, cultural evaluations may come to be perceived as agents of 'positive illusions' (Bennett, 2011), feeding skewed notions of 'evidence-based policy' that eventually act as agents of implicit cultural policy (Ahearne & Bennett, 2009; Ganga, et al., 2021). At times, as Evans (2005, p. 960) ruefully observes, it may seem that 'the attention to the high-cost and high-profile culture-led regeneration projects is in inverse proportion to the strength and quality of evidence of their regenerative effects'.

As one of the highest profile and longest running cultural events in the world, the ECoC is 'ground zero' for this debate – with research on its purported effects perfectly illustrating the tensions inherent in cultural policy research on events evaluation. On the one hand, the myths and rhetoric of the ECoC as a driver for economic (and other) changes is still prevalent, while discussions on 'ambivalent legacies'! and '!authentic lived realities'! (reflected in deprivation, gentrification and a lack of cultural democratisation) are still to gain a proper foothold beyond the academic debate (Holden, 2004; Belfiore, 2009; Boland,

Murtagh, & Shirlow, 2019; Wallstam, et al., 2020). And yet co-existing ~~in parallel~~ with this narrative are numerous, more critical studies of the ECoC from the academic realm that have highlighted, for example, the negative impacts of the event on residents' wellbeing (Steiner, Frey, & Hotz, 2015), and the irreconcilability of the ECoC's core objectives ~~ECoC~~ (O'Callaghan, 2012). This paper attests first-hand to the tensions inherent in cultural mega-event evaluations, situating it squarely within this wider debate.

Revisiting research on cultural mega-events

As noted in the introduction to this paper, the revisiting of past events within the cultural policy field is rare, despite the short-term focus of most evaluations, and despite also the 'mythos' of long-term legacy that has emerged, largely uncontested, around certain events. They are far more common, however, within the fields of anthropology and sociology, where there exists a livelier and better developed body of research. As this literature reveals, there are a number of ways that research can be revisited. One such approach, *replication*, aims simply to test the robustness of findings. Another, *data re-analysis*, involves revisiting original materials to answer the same research question (Camfield & Palmer-Jones, 2013). In contrast, the approach underpinning *Impacts 18* is probably best described as a 're-study', as per Goodwin and O'Connor's (2009; 2010) re-study of the Young Worker Project; or perhaps as a 'revisit', as per ~~and~~ Burawoy's (2003) typology~~revisits classification~~. Understood as a study where a researcher returns to the site of a previous study, a re-study can include new data generated by new respondents, revisit the same geographical locations, use the original research questions, and re-analyse existing datasets. In essence, re-study aims to replicate as closely as possible the original study methodology with a view to understanding social change across time; an approach distinct from longitudinal study, insofar as the longer-term component is not part of the original design (Davies and Charles, 2002). As an 'anatomisation' of an empirical re-study, this paper adds modestly to the broader (and relatively well developed) debate on 'revisits' and their methodological design. However, it also contributes more specifically – and probably more usefully –– to the discourse on revisits within a cultural policy context, which, as we have noted, remains under-developed, despite the lack of research on the longer-term impacts of cultural events and the impetus for further enquiry that this presents.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the origins and methodological approach adopted by *Impacts 18*, together with the rationale for this paper and its own particular methodological approach. As already alluded to, the genesis of *Impacts 18* can be located in the shortcomings and limitations of *Impacts 08*, the original evaluation of the Liverpool ECoC. *Impacts 08* became a classic of cultural policy research when it was first published, as a large-scale study that received considerable funding and attracted the attention of policy-makers, media and researchers alike (REF2014, n.d.). Yet, despite the fact that the 'Liverpool Model' (Garcia, Cox, & Melville, 2010; Connolly, 2013) came to be regarded as an exemplar to be emulated in the wake of the Liverpool ECoC (Bianchini, Albano, & Bollo, 2013; Čuříková, et al., 2023) the longer-term sustainability of its impacts – socially, culturally and economically – had in fact yet to be

evidenced (Cox and O'Brien, 2012). Given its timeframes for analysis and reporting, there were significant and unavoidable limitations in the degree to which *Impacts 08* had been able to comment on the longer-term effects of the Liverpool ECoC; whilst in academic circles, the methodology and results of the research had been met with some degree of controversy and scepticism (Campbell, et al., 2017). In short, there was a strong epistemological case for the research to be revisited in some way. As the ten-year anniversary of the Liverpool ECoC approached, this epistemological case was bolstered by the more pragmatic calculation by stakeholders within the City of Liverpool that the anniversary year – and in particular, research on the longer-term legacy of the ECoC – held significant propagandistic potential to reinforce prevailing boosterist narratives of 'city renaissance' (West, 2021). It was against this backdrop of compelling but incompatible incentive structures that *Impacts 18* commenced, with the project led by the Institute of Cultural Capital (a collaboration between the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University), with the foreknowledge and support of Liverpool City Council.

Consistent with the features of a 're-study' outlined above, *Impacts 18* adopted an elastic approach to revisiting the impact of the Liverpool ECoC. The project entailed the use of data both retrospectively (~~e.g.~~e.g., through the re-analysis and re-use of pre-existing data generated either by the original project or by secondary sources) and prospectively (~~e.g.~~e.g., by generating new datasets). Where *Impacts 08* had been unable to capture post-event trends in any appreciable depth, *Impacts 18*, it was hoped, would be able to demonstrate change over time (Thomson, 2007; Corden & Millar, 2007) and from this analysis infer not only the short-term but also the long-term impacts of the Liverpool ECoC. Like *Impacts 08*, the re-study focused its enquiry on five cross-cutting thematic areas: cultural participation (~~i.e.~~i.e., the 'demand-side' of the cultural equation), cultural vibrancy (i.e. the 'supply-side' of the cultural equation), city image and perceptions (i.e. perceptions and representations of the city both internally and externally), the visitor economy, and cultural governance. A combination of discrete projects and work packages – many of them revisitations of *Impacts 08* projects – were undertaken to produce evidence against each one of these themes, with a multidisciplinary 'revisiting' team assembled to lead each of the respective projects.

From the outset, there were a number of factors which ostensibly augured well for *Impacts 18* as an empirical re-study. The collaboration between the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University for *Impacts 08* had led to the creation of the Institute of Cultural Capital in 2010. This institute archived the project data, providing the infrastructure for researchers to revisit and re-use the original study datasets. Obviously, Liverpool as a research site still existed too, allowing researchers to access key primary resources (~~e.g.~~e.g., residents, cultural organisations and policy bodies~~organisations, etc.~~) for further data collection. In terms of personnel, *Impacts 18* was fronted by the same principal investigator as *Impacts 08* and involved, for a time, one of the main original researchers – a setup that provided additional insight into the design and execution of the *Impacts 08* programme.

Arguably, however, *Impacts 18* proved to be something of a failure – falling far short of its own (unrealistically high) explanatory ambitions, whilst simultaneously producing conclusions that, for some, proved too controversial to publish. In this paper, the authors reflect on their experience as researchers on the programme and on two

projects in particular on which they were designated a leading role, firstly in order to dissect the *how* and the *why* of this 'failure'; but more importantly to explore the wider significance of these findings in relation to the three key scholarly debates identified above.

The first of these projects is *Neighbourhood Impacts*, a revisitation of a local area study conducted ten years earlier under the auspices of *Impacts 08*. The new study, conducted roughly a decade later as part of *Impacts 18*, involved briefly: (i) the re-analysis of Liverpool's socio-demographic composition, using the latest available secondary data, in order to determine whether the four areas ('neighbourhoods') examined ten years previously could still be considered sufficiently representative of the city as a whole; (ii) a series of focus groups with residents in these four areas, concerning the participants' current cultural practices and their perceptions and memories of the ECoC; and (iii) a door-to-door survey of residents within these four areas covering similar themes to the focus groups (n = 750). The project was mainly designed to inform two of the five overarching themes outlined above – 'city image and perceptions' and 'cultural participation' – with an expectation that data could be incorporated from the original study, which similarly gathered survey data (each year between 2007 and 2009) and focus group data (in 2008 only). This mixed-methods integrated design was intended to enhance the methodological robustness of the project by combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth (Salkind, 2010; Bishop & Kuula-Luumi, 2017; Sligo, et al., 2018).

The second project we focus particular attention on is the *Press Content Analysis*. One of the main projects undertaken by *Impacts 08* was a longitudinal analysis of local, national and international press content, in order to determine how representations of Liverpool and the Liverpool ECoC evolved over time. Similar to other projects that were conducted as part of the *Impacts 08* programme, however, the press content analysis published in 2010 (Impacts 08, 2010) could not extend its scope appreciably beyond the event year itself – a limitation that effectively restricted the project to the evaluation of trends before and during the event year. Linked mostly to the aforementioned 'city image and perceptions' theme, the *Impacts 18* press content project sought to address this shortcoming by extending data collection into the post-ECoC period. Focusing only on UK national press coverage, the *Impacts 18* press analysis deviated from the original study in a number of ways (both intentionally and unintentionally). In the following section, we consider the reasons for and consequences of these methodological divergences. Here, it need only be noted that there were also significant *continuities* between the two studies – for example, in terms of the database used to extract content, the selection of newspapers, and the approaches to sampling and coding content – that were reflective of an intention (and expectation) that datasets from the two research programmes would be combined and jointly analysed.

4. Findings

The paper considers four, interrelated aspects of the research process: epistemological framing, methodological design, data infrastructure and management, and stakeholder relationship management. For each of these four aspects, the paper explores the various issues raised by *Impacts 18* as a re-study of a cultural mega-event, and offers commentary as to the causation and implications of these issues. Specific observations from the *Neighbourhood*

Impacts and *Press Content Analysis* projects are offered to illustrate and substantiate these broader issues.

Documentary analysis of the unpublished research outputs from these two projects – together with critical reflections and research notes from the authors themselves – illustrate many of the classic challenges associated with the evaluation of cultural mega-events, as well as the tensions and sites of contestation that can become problematically and stubbornly embedded within such exercises. Many of these issues are generic and are likely to apply to the majority of evaluations of cultural mega-events, as well as to many evaluations of smaller-scale and even non-cultural events. However, the experience of the authors is likely to be especially pertinent to analyses of the longer-term impacts of cultural mega-events – especially where research revisits established narratives or pre-existing evidence bases.

Epistemological framing

The epistemological framing and underpinning of a piece of research is arguably its most fundamental building block (Bachelard, 1990). In essence, we use this term to refer to the kinds of knowledge that researchers can realistically expect to generate in answer to a given research question – including, perhaps most pertinently in this case, the strength and unambiguousness of the causal relationships that might potentially be inferred from the available research data. In its objective to interrogate the longer-term impacts of the Liverpool ECoC, the overriding purpose of *Impacts 18* was clear. However, researchers involved in the programme observed how its epistemological framing was not sufficiently thought through or clearly articulated. At the heart of the programme, there was an implicit assumption that the identification of longer-term event impacts would not pose a significantly greater challenge than the identification of short-term event impacts; or, in other words, that causal relationships could be inferred just as confidently ten years post-event as they could in the immediate aftermath of the event (Steiner, et al., 2015). Of course, this is not the case. Even short-term event impacts – whether on local economies or perceptions of place – can be difficult to disentangle from myriad competing factors, and this process of disentangling tends to become only more difficult as time passes from the point of intervention (Bowitz & Ibenholt, 2009). It follows logically that longer-term examinations of event legacies, especially, should eschew positivistic epistemological frameworks that imagine impact as something that can be isolated and quantified with precision, in favour of frameworks that acknowledge the significant epistemological challenges inherent in mega-event evaluations. That this did not happen in the case of *Impacts 18* had regrettable but unavoidable adverse knock-on effects on other aspects of the research process – with this underlining the crucial role played by epistemological framing in determining the success (or failure) of mega-event evaluations.

Methodological design

The second aspect of the research process that we consider, methodological design, has an interactive and co-dependent relationship with the epistemological framing of research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Salkind, 2010). Expectations in terms of the 'truth claims' that a mega-event evaluation will be able to furnish naturally influence the selection and design of methodological tools; but familiarity with and understanding of these methodological tools can also expand (or narrow) the epistemological

horizons of a project. As we have established, in the case of *Impacts 18* the epistemological assumptions underpinning the research were more or less transplanted from *Impacts 08*. As such, there was an 'internal validity' to the prevailing argument that the same methodological tools could be applied in the context of *Impacts 18*, even if this was an argument that was based, in reality, on flawed assumptions (Davies & Charles, 2002). Under this approach, data collected as part of *Impacts 18* was intended to be maximally compatible with data collected under *Impacts 08*, in order for time series datasets to be straightforwardly extended and analysis facilitated. For most projects within the wider programme, this meant the more or less faithful replication of methods applied by *Impacts 08*, without sufficient consideration of their suitability and without scope for significant methodological redesign or refinement (Bishop, 2009; Bishop & Kuula-Luumi, 2017). Similar to *Impacts 08*, this was, in essence, a methodological approach characterised by the 'purely empirical description of changes' (Burawoy, 2003, p. 663), with no real rooting in the latest academic literature and no theoretical frame developed to guide the research process.

This overarching methodological approach – one marked by hyper-empiricism, a detachedness from theory, and the marginalisation of relevant academic literature – created numerous problems when applied to our re-study ~~on~~ of the long-term effects of the Liverpool ECoC. Some of these issues are more 'applied' (~~i.e.~~ i.e., specific to the circumstances of our particular research). However, there are also more fundamental drawbacks to this sort of approach. For example, the sort of hyper-empiricism described here almost invariably obscures the fact that data is far from objective, neutral or value-free (Santos, 2002). On the contrary, data are shaped by research instruments and by the relationship between researchers and research subjects (Moore, 2007); a research apparatus which, in turn, is shaped by epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions that need to be acknowledged and made clear (Hammersley, 2010). Imagining that the original research apparatus from *Impacts 08* could, and should, be re-adopted, meanwhile, overlooked the extent to which critical research on mega-cultural events had developed in the decade following the Liverpool ECoC (Campbell, Cox, & O'Brien, 2017; Cox & O'Brien, 2012; O'Brien, 2013; Campbell, 2011; O'Brien, 2010; Belfiore, 2009; O'Callaghan, 2012). *Impact 18* could have responded to these contemporary cultural policy debates, developing a realistic and reflexive approach to re-studying the legacy of Liverpool as ECoC that overcame the 'critiques of evidence-gathering practice' (Campbell, Cox, & O'Brien, 2017), moved beyond the 'toolkit approach' (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010), and transcended the 'logic chain approach for articulating "impact" and "outcomes" ~~stems~~' (Gilmore, 2014).

Another issue with methodological approaches to re-study that privilege longitudinal fidelity – as in the case of *Impacts 18* – is the inherent but sometimes overlooked methodological 'opportunity cost' involved (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Salkind, 2010). In other words, ~~that~~ by electing to re-use a particular set of methods, researchers may discount or be forced to forgo more promising alternatives. In practice, for *Impacts 18*, this meant the abandonment of creative qualitative methods that had been proposed for the *Neighbourhood Impacts* project, as well as a failure, for example, to complement the *Press Content Analysis* with analyses of digital and social media content.

These are all criticisms based on 'what was not but could have been'; in effect, the ways

in which *Impacts 18* represented a missed opportunity to do things differently in methodological terms. However, there were also various inherent problems with the hyper-empiricist, atheoretical approach described above that do not rely on unfavourable comparisons with an imagined 'better way of doing things', but rather demonstrate the inadequacies of the methodological paradigm on its own terms. For example, for projects reliant largely on primary data, one difficulty in treating *Impacts 18* essentially as a means of extending baseline datasets was the decade-long empirical 'black hole' between data collection intervals. In the case of the *Neighbourhood Impacts* project, data was originally collected from Liverpool residents for three consecutive years between 2007 and 2009, with similar data collected again in 2018 as part of *Impacts 18* (see, e.g. Peterson, 2005). Such a significant gap would not have presented an issue if the epistemological framing for the overall programme of research had accepted uncertainty, ambiguity and nuance as an inevitable, and indeed valuable, outcome of the research, as opposed to pursuing findings that could be quantified straightforwardly and presented without equivocation (Sligo, et al., 2018). However, the expectation that *Impacts 18* could serve as the empirical 'epilogue' to the original evaluation programme meant that gaps in the data time series were problematised and rendered more conspicuous than needed to be the case.

Even where substantial time series gaps did not exist – for instance, for projects reliant to a greater extent on secondary data – the hyper-empiricist philosophy of replicating methodologies in order to extend datasets generally overlooked the extent to which causal arguments concerning the short-term impacts of the Liverpool ECoC often rested, at least in part, on the proximity of the intervention to a change observed in a particular dataset. The *Press Content Analysis* project that was re-run as part of *Impacts 18* illustrates precisely this problem. By tracking over a period of years the general representation of Liverpool within the press, together with the representation of the Liverpool ECoC specifically, *Impacts 08* was able to argue plausibly that the ECoC had resulted in a change in the way that the city was represented in the mainstream media – at least temporarily (Garcia, 2017). During the event year, as one would perhaps expect, a greater proportion of national coverage was dedicated to the arts and cultural offer of the city, with a commensurately smaller proportion of coverage focusing on crime, drugs and social issues. As part of *Impacts 18*, the same kinds of data were collected and the same kind of analysis undertaken – creating datasets that spanned the pre- and post-ECoC periods. Yet as coverage relating to the Liverpool ECoC receded substantially post-event, it naturally became more tenuous to infer the longer-term effects of the event, given the confluence of competing factors.

A further danger in replicating and extending empirical methodologies over a considerable period of time is the risk that broader social, economic and technological developments will 'overtake' the research – rendering it less relevant or, worse still, less internally inconsistent as a consequence (Seale, et al., 2004). In the case of the *Neighbourhood Impacts* project, the researchers involved with *Impacts 18* were satisfied that the four areas selected as part of the original *Impacts 08* study remained broadly representative of the city as a whole, despite a predictable element of demographic change over the decade-long period concerned. However, these kinds of broader systemic change presented much more of an issue for other projects, and in particular the analysis of press content. Data

analysed by *Impacts 08* for this project went back as far as the mid-to-late 1990s, albeit with most of the data relating to the following decade. *Impacts 18*, meanwhile, collected data from the post-event period up until and including the year 2017. In the UK, national newspapers undoubtedly retain influence. Yet few would argue that they remain as influential as they once were – and certainly not in an information landscape transformed, in recent years, by social media and the arrival of exclusively online news media outlets (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2016). If the traditional press is less important in shaping and reflecting perceptions of place than it was in the 1990s or even the 2000s, it follows that the relevance of press content analysis to a longer-term analysis of the impacts of the Liverpool ECoC can be called into question – at least in the format that was deemed appropriate for the original event evaluation. However, it is the effect of the aforementioned technological changes on the practice and complexion of contemporary news journalism – and indeed on the media ecosystem as a whole – which posed the greatest stumbling block to the meaningful extension of the *Impacts 08* press content analysis method into the post-ECoC period. As others have noted (see, e.g., Davies 2011; Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2016), the transition from print-based to online news has placed significant pressures on traditional news media. Processes of digitalisation have led to a hollowing-out of local and regional news outlets, in particular, as well as the rise of what Davies (2011) dubbed 'churnalism': a journalistic practice characterised by low quality, derivative and often plagiarised output, lacking in investigative foundation or critical thinking. In practice, for many papers, the ascendancy of churnalism has resulted in an explosion of 'clickbait' and celebrity-focused articles, as well as the cross-posting of stories from other news titles within the same media group. For a researcher interested in the representation of a particular place within particular news outlets over time, this presents a formidable problem, with objective change in the representation of place difficult to disaggregate and isolate from broader shifts in the practice of news journalism.

Data infrastructure and management

Following epistemological framing and methodological design, robust data infrastructures and management are of course, fundamental to the validity of any research, but particularly so for projects that rely in part on baselines established by historical research projects or unrelated teams of researchers (Seale, et al., 2004). Here, we focus on three issues pertaining to data infrastructures and management where *Impacts 18* presents an instructive example: data access, data quality and metadata.

For re-studies, access to historical data is obviously a fundamental and basic prerequisite. In the case of *Impacts 18*, however, the revisiting researchers were surprised to encounter at times significant difficulty in accessing or identifying baseline data from the *Impacts 08* programme, with these issues leading subsequently to delays or methodological alterations. In the case of the *Neighbourhood Impacts* project, for example, there was simply no means of accessing the original qualitative dataset, which comprised a series of focus groups with Liverpool residents – meaning that the re-study had to rely exclusively instead on survey data from the period.

Even in instances where data access could be secured, issues were also frequently encountered in terms of the quality and consistency of baseline datasets themselves – inconsistencies that the authors and their

colleagues had no choice but to resolve themselves, where practicable. This was particularly true of the quantitative data bequeathed by the original *Neighbourhood Impacts* and *Press Content Analysis* projects – re-inspection of which as part of our re-study revealed clear inconsistencies that were not always easily resolved.

Our experience demonstrates, however, that even seamless access to internally consistent, high quality historical data is not sufficient, on its own, when conducting a re-study like *Impacts 18*. As Peterson (2005) notes, the failure to document data management practices in sufficient detail can also cause problems for revisiting researchers, who may not be privy to the ways in which data has been gathered and processed. Metadata – in essence, data about data – provides contextual information on the provenance, meaning and significance of data that may prove crucial to its successful re-application. An absence or lack of metadata, conversely, can lead to the misinterpretation of data, with potentially serious knock-on effects on the validity of research. Such was the case for our *Press Content Analysis* project, where one variable of the analysis that had been carried over from the *Impacts 08* method ended up being coded in a completely different (and incompatible) way, owing simply to a lack of clear metadata from the original study.

For researchers engaged on similar projects, these experiences underscore the importance of taking nothing for granted when it comes to the accessibility and quality of baseline data, and of building appropriate contingencies and 'fail-safes' into re-study designs, where possible (Salkind, 2010)

Stakeholder relationship management

Last of the four research processes that we highlight in this paper is stakeholder relationship management. For cultural event evaluations, this is an especially prominent and often difficult aspect of most projects, where conflicting values and agendas can result in tensions between different stakeholders (Ooi, et al., 2014). These tensions were particularly pronounced in the case of *Impacts 18* because of its status as a re-study that challenged – not just the expectations of stakeholders – but also the findings of the original evaluation of the Liverpool ECoC and indeed the well-established public narratives of success that had built up around the event during the intervening period (see, e.g., Barnett, 2017; Brown, 2017).

These tensions manifested both internally (~~i.e.~~ i.e., within the research team) and externally with groups that had a vested interest in the research. Internally, tensions arose between the researchers who had not been part of the original Liverpool ECoC evaluation, on the one hand, and the principal investigator, on the other hand, who had been behind both *Impacts 08* and *Impacts 18*. Historically, revisitation studies of different kinds have tended to generate discrepancies between the original and follow-up study, resulting often in methodological and theoretical disputes, and indeed embargoes on research outputs (O'Connor & Goodwin, 2010; O'Connor & Goodwin, 2012; Sligo, et al., 2018). In these respects, *Impacts 18* was no different, with the principal investigator ultimately embargoing the final *Impacts 18* report, which is still yet to be published, at the time of writing.

Relationships with external stakeholders were equally fractious. Typically, an array of governmental and non-governmental organisations will have an interest in a given mega-event – whether because of their organisational remit, their geographic area of operations, or in some cases their direct financial stake in the event (Németh, 2016; Baker, et al., 2018; Belfiore, 2009; Biondi,

et al., 2020). If managed responsibly and effectively, these relationships can of course materially enrich the evaluation process. However, excessive stakeholder interference in the evaluation process can also, conversely, skew or invalidate the findings of the research and how these findings are presented. For *Impacts 08*, Liverpool City Council were the single most important institutional stakeholder, as both the underwriters of the Liverpool Culture Company (the arms-length ECoC delivery body) and indeed the commissioners of the research itself. For *Impacts 18*, the relationship with Liverpool City Council was different. Whilst the council was recognised as a stakeholder with a legitimate interest in the follow-on research – as well as a potentially valuable source of evidence – it did not, most notably, act as funder of the research.

Despite this, the authors and their colleagues experienced substantial difficulties in working with the city council as a partner. On reflection, these difficulties can be seen to stem from fundamental and irreconcilable differences of perspective with regards to the very purpose that *Impacts 18* was intended to serve (Campbell, et al., 2017); and as emblematic, in many ways, of the tension between critical and advocacy-driven cultural policy research. For the revisiting researchers, *Impacts 18* was an academic programme of research that would examine fairly and objectively whether long-term impacts from the Liverpool ECoC could be evidenced. For the city council, however, the research seemed to serve only to lend credence and further weight to a pre-established and totemic narrative of success, as evidenced by effusive statements that were released *before* the research had even concluded (Culture Liverpool, 2018; BBC News, 2018, n.p.). Although the authors and their colleagues succeeded in defending the integrity of their work over the course of the research, they nevertheless consistently felt pressure to modify the way that findings from the research were presented, in order to mollify and appease the city council. This experience is particularly instructive for researchers engaged in similar projects. A common problem highlighted by evaluators of cultural mega-events is that of 'unrealistic expectations' on the part of stakeholder groups. Of course, where this is the root cause of tension between the researchers and the stakeholder, then dialogue should be undertaken in good faith to recalibrate expectations, if possible, and resolve the issue. However, researchers must also be mindful of a lesser acknowledged problem, which in the case of Impacts 18 was evident: namely, where the stakeholder organisation is intrinsically opposed to evaluation as a genuinely open-ended and transparent process of inquiry. In these cases, dialogue with the stakeholder is unlikely to resolve the source of tension, and may indeed invite further, unwelcome pressure on researchers to compromise the integrity of the research (Cox & O'Brien, 2012).

5. Discussion

The experiences of the authors as revisiting researchers on the *Impacts 18* programme raise a number of considerations for academic research on cultural events; and in particular, for re-studies of cultural event evaluations and research on the ECoC programme. Not all of these proposals and suggestions are new. Indeed, many have been advocated for extensively elsewhere in the scholarly and cultural policy literature (see, ~~e.g.~~e.g., Belfiore, 2016; Campbell, et al., 2017; Ganga, 2022). Where this paper adds value and empirical substance to these arguments, however, is in providing first-hand, practice-based testimony and evidence that strengthens the case for change in the way that such research is often framed and

carried out. In this section, we revisit the three, interrelated scholarly debates introduced at the very beginning of this paper and consider how the lessons from the *Impacts 18* project might help to advance cultural policy research and lead to better evaluation of cultural events.

In terms of the debate over 'cultural value', first of all, and how this should be defined, captured and evidenced (Walmsley, 2012; O'Brien, 2014; Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016; Baker, Bull, & Taylor, 2018; Belfiore, 2016, 2020), *Impacts 18* can be seen to expose – or rather reaffirm – the limitations of an evaluation paradigm characterised by overly positivistic epistemological assumptions, undue confidence in the ability to detect linear cause-effect relationships, and the privileging and fetishisation of quantitative data. In so doing, however, the research programme has also underscored, in our view, the multi-faceted, pluralistic and often elusive nature of cultural value (Walmsley, 2012; Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016), and by extension the necessity of building methodologies rooted in mixed-methods data collection and analysis (Irwin, 2011). There is still clearly a widespread belief that the impacts of events like the ECoC are best or most convincingly communicated by 'killer stats' and key figures (Gilmore, 2014). Yet, the experience of *Impacts 18* suggests that methodological designs into which these biases are built will in fact fail to capture many aspects of the cultural value of such events, and at times indeed fail even on their own terms.

In terms of the long-standing tension between critical and advocacy-driven cultural policy research (Bennett, 2004; Baker, Bull, & Taylor, 2018) – the second scholarly debate that we highlight – the *Impacts 18* experience suggests the need for a revision in expectations from cultural event evaluation, and to some extent the need to transcend, or at least 'dial down', the pervasive rhetoric of impact itself. As their names suggest, both *Impacts 08* and *Impacts 18* had the concept of impact embedded at their heart, and the grandiose narrative – or 'mythos' – that has developed around Liverpool as ECoC host city in part rests on the conclusions presented by the original evaluation. Evaluations of other ECoC host cities have made similarly impressive claims. However, for those involved as researcher-evaluators, the purported legacies of previous host cities may present an issue if they create a weight of expectation to either match or outperform a city's peers. Indeed, there is a more systemic risk that this sort of dynamic may lead over time – or has led, as some contend (see, e.g., Belfiore, 2016) – to an observable 'inflationary' effect in impact claims, wherein the desire for host cities to be perceived as successful drives a slow but steady ratcheting up of reported outcomes (Bennett, 2011; Ganga, et al., 2021). In the case of *Impacts 18*, this tension manifested itself in a unique and unusual way, with the authors clearly expected to produce results of equal or greater magnitude to the previous evaluation of the Liverpool ECoC, rather than another host city or cities. Yet regardless, the lesson from our experience seems clear: excessive emphasis on impact within public and policy discourse risks undermining the truth and knowledge-seeking functions of evaluation, both for current and future host cities. It follows, accordingly, that the gatekeepers and custodians of events like the ECoC should take steps to actively 'de-escalate' or 'reset' the narrative around impact.

The third scholarly debate that we highlighted at the outset of this paper – on revisiting methodologies and how these can best be tailored to the cultural policy field (O'Connor & Goodwin, 2010; O'Connor & Goodwin, 2012; Burawoy, 2003) – should clearly be informed by the preceding two arguments. Similar to 'brand new' research

on cultural events, re-studies will benefit from eschewing 'impact fetishism' and a bias towards quantitative evidence, and by embracing research paradigms, in contrast, that put pluralistic conceptions and ways of measuring cultural value at their core. However, the main service that *Impacts 18* has provided in terms of this debate – at least in a cultural policy context – is arguably in showcasing the potential utility of re-studies in a field where they are seldom used. As this paper has shown, *Impacts 18* was in many ways a missed opportunity to do things differently; or to put it rather bluntly, to avoid precisely the pitfalls that this paper has highlighted. However, it has also managed, despite this, to demonstrate the role that such studies could play in adding to the dearth of evidence on the longer-term effects of cultural events, and in helping to uncover and expose event legacy narratives that rest on shaky empirical foundations.

These recommendations are of course, to some extent, interlinked and co-dependent. Given the important role for policymakers in shaping the 'rules of the game' when it comes to cultural events and their evaluation, they are also beyond the power of cultural policy researchers on their own to enact. However, we hope that the shortcomings of *Impacts 18* that we have explored in this paper – and perhaps just as importantly, the preparedness of the authors to acknowledge those shortcomings (Jancovich, 2021) – can help in some small way to advance cultural evaluation practices.

6. References

Ahearne, J. & Bennett, O., 2009. Implicit Cultural Policies. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 15(2),* pp. 139-244.

Bachelard, G., 1990. *A Epistemologia.* Lisboa: Edições 70.

Baker, G., Bull, A. & Taylor, M., 2018. Who watches the watchmen? Evaluating evaluations of El Sistema. *British Journal of Music Education, 1-15.*

Barnett, D., 2017. Kingston upon Hull: Culture can be a catalyst for real change in any city. *Independent*, 26 January. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/culture-can-be-a-catalyst-for-real-change-in-any-city-a7541656.html

BBC News, 2018. Liverpool to mark Capital of Culture 'milestone' with year of events. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-42637759

Belfiore, E., 2009. On bullshit in cultural policy practice and research: notes from the British case. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, Vol.15 (No.3),* pp. 343-359.

Belfiore, E., 2016. Cultural policy research in the real world: curating "impact", facilitating "enlightenment". *Cultural Trends, 25:3,* pp. 205-216.

Belfiore, E., 2020. Whose cultural value? Representation, power and creative industries. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 26(3),* pp. 383-397.

Belfiore, E. & Bennett, O., 2010. Beyond the "Toolkit Approach": arts impact evaluation research and the realities of cultural policy-making. *Journal for cultural research, 14(2),* pp. 121-142.

Bennett, O., 2004. Review essay: The torn halves of cultural policy research. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 10(2),* p. 237–248.

Bennett, O., 2011. Cultures of optimism. *Cultural Sociology, 5(2),* pp. 301-320.

Bianchini, F., Albano, R. & Bollo, A., 2013. The Regenerative Impacts of the European City/Capital of Culture Events. Leary, M.E. & McCarthy, J. (eds) *The Routledge*

Companion to Urban Regeneration, Routledge, pp. 515-525.

Biondi, L. et al., 2020. Understanding orchestrated participatory cultural initiatives: Mapping the dynamics of governance and participation. *Cities, 96,* p. 102459.

Bishop, L., 2009. Ethical sharing and reuse of qualitative data. *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 44(3), pp. 255-272.

Bishop, L. & Kuula-Luumi, A., 2017. Revisiting Qualitative Data Reuse: A Decade On. *Sage Open, 7(1),* pp. 1-15.

Boland, P., Murtagh, B. & Shirlow, P., 2019. Fashioning a City of Culture:'life and place changing'or '12 month party'?. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 25(2),* pp. 246-265.

Boltanski, L. & Thévenot, L., 2006. *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bowitz, E. & Ibenholt, K., 2009. Economic impacts of cultural heritage – Research and perspectives. *Journal of Cultural Heritage, 10(1),* pp. 1-8.

Brown, M., 2017. Coventry named UK city of culture 2021. *Guardian*, 7 December. https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2017/dec/07/coventry-named-uk-city-of-culture-2021

Burawoy, M., 2003. Revisits: An outline of a theory of reflexive ethnography. *American Sociological Review, 68,* pp. 645-679.

Burawoy, M., 2005. For public sociology-. *American Sociological Review, 70(1),* pp. 4-28.

Camfield, L. & Palmer-Jones, R., 2013. Improving the quality of development research: What could archiving qualitative data for reanalysis and revisiting research sites contribute?. *Progress in Development Studies,* 13(4), pp. 323-338.

Campbell, P., 2011. Creative industries in a European Capital of Culture. *International Journal of Cultural Policy,* 17(5), pp.510-522.

Campbell, P., Cox, T. & O'Brien, D., 2017. The social life of measurement: how methods have shaped the idea of culture in urban regeneration. *Journal of Cultural Economy, 10(1),* pp. 49-62.

Charles, R., 2004. The Arrogance of Public Sociology. *Social Forces, 82(4),* pp. 1639-1643.

Connolly, M.G., 2013. The 'Liverpool model (s)': cultural planning, Liverpool and Capital of Culture 2008. International Journal of Cultural Policy, 19(2), pp.162-181.

Corden, A. & Millar, J., 2007. Time and Change: A Review of the Qualitative Longitudinal Research Literature for Social Policy. *Social Policy and Society,* 6(4), pp. 583-592.

Cox, T. & O'Brien, D., 2012. The "scouse wedding" and other myths: reflections on the evolution of a "Liverpool model" for culture-led urban regeneration. *Cultural Trends, 21(2),* pp. 93-101.

Creswell, J. & Plano Clark, V., 2017. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research 3th edition.* London: Sage.

Crossick, G. & Kaszynska, P., 2016. *Understanding the value of arts & culture. The AHRC cultural value project*. Swindon: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Cudny, W., Comunian, R. and Wolaniuk, A., 2020. Arts and creativity: A business and branding strategy for Lodz as a neoliberal city. *Cities*, 100, p.102659.

Culture Liverpool, 2018. *Impacts 18: A Cultural Legacy.* [Online]

Available at: https://www.cultureliverpool.co.uk/news/impacts-18-a-cultural-legacy/ [Acesso em 08 April 2021].

Čuříková, I., Jenková, P., Kultová, P., Lukašáková, M., Silondi, M., & Smékalová, A. 2023. *Broumov 2028. Candidate City to the European Capital of Culture.* Broumov: City of Broumov.

Davies, C. & Charles, N., 2002. The Piano in the Parlour: Methodological Issues in the Conduct of a Restudy. *Sociological Research Online,* 7(2).

Davies, N., 2011. *Flat earth news: An award-winning reporter exposes falsehood, distortion and propaganda in the global media.* London: Random House.

Evans, G., 2005. Measure for measure: Evaluating the evidence of culture's contribution to regeneration. *Urban studies*, 42(5-6), pp.959-983.

Ganga, R. N., 2022. Evaluate Cultural Events Legacy – from policy to engaged research. Em: N. Wise & K. McMaguire, eds. *A Research Agenda for Event Impacts.* London: Edward Elge, p. (in press).

Ganga, R. N., Wise, N. & Perić, M., 2021. Exploring implicit and explicit cultural policy dimensions through major-event and neoliberal rhetoric. *City, Culture and Society,* Volume 100401.

Garcia, B., 2017. 'If everyone says so…'Press narratives and image change in major event host cities. *Urban Studies,* 54(4), pp. 3178-3198.

Garcia, B. & Cox, T., 2013. *European Capitals of Culture. Success Strategies and Long Term Effects.* [Online] Available at: https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3002251/1/Garcia(2013)ECoCSuccess+LongTermEffects.pdf [Acesso em 08 August 2021].

Garcia, B. & Cox, T., 2013. *European Capitals of Culture: Success strategies and long-term effects,* Luxembourg: Office of the European Union.

Garcia, B., Cox, T. & Melville, R., 2010. *Creating an impact: Liverpool's experience as European Capital of Culture.* Liverpool(Merseyside): University of Liverpool.

Gilmore, A., 2014. Evaluating legacies: Research, evidence and the regional impact of the Cultural Olympiad. *Cultural Trends, Vol 23 Issue 1,* pp. 29-41.

Hadley, S. & Belfiore, E., 2018. Cultural democracy and cultural policy. *Cultural Trends, 27(3),* pp. 218-223.

Hammersley, M., 2010. Sociological Research Online, 15(1). *Can we re-use qualitative data via secondary analysis? Notes on some terminological and substantive issues,* pp. 47-53.

Holden, J., 2004. *Capturing cultural value: How culture has become a tool of government policy.* London: Demos.

Impacts 08, 2010. *Media Impact Assessment (Part II).* Liverpool: University of Liverpool.

Irwin, S., 2011. Working across qualitative and quantitative data. Childhood, youth and social inequalities. *European Journal on Child and Youth Research, 6,,* pp. 58-63.

Jancovich, L. and Stevenson, D., 2021. Failure seems to be the hardest word to say. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, pp.1-15.

Jancovich, L. & Hansen, L. E., 2018. Rethinking participation in the Aarhus as European Capital of Culture 2017 project. *Cultural Trends, 27(3),* pp. 173-186.

Jones, Z.M. and Ponzini, D., 2018. Mega-events and the preservation of urban heritage: Literature gaps, potential overlaps,

and a call for further research. *Journal of Planning Literature*, *33*(4), pp.433-450.

Kalleberg, R., 2005. What is 'public sociology'? Why and how should it be made stronger?. *The British Journal of Sociology, 56(3),* pp. 387-393.

Lähdesmäki, T., 2012. Rhetoric of unity and cultural diversity in the making of European cultural identity. *International journal of cultural policy*, *18*(1), pp.59-75.

Liu, Y. D., 2019. Event and sustainable culture-led regeneration: Lessons from the 2008 European Capital of Culture, Liverpool. *Sustainability, 11(7),* p. 1869.

Liu, Y.D., 2017. Quality of life as event legacy: An evaluation of Liverpool as the 2008 European Capital of Culture. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *12*(3), pp.653-670.

Németh, Á., 2016. European capitals of culture–digging deeper into the governance of the mega-event. *Territory, Politics, Governance, 4(1),* pp. 52-74.

Nichols, L. T., 2015. Sociology, Evaluation and Dialogue. *The American Sociologist, 46(4),* pp. 435-436.

Nielsen, F., 2004. The Vacant 'We': Remarks on Public Sociology. *Social Forces, 82(4),* pp. 1619-1627.

O'Brien, D., 2010. *Measuring the value of culture: A report to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport*. London: DCMS.

O'Brien, D., 2014. *Cultural Policy: Management, Value and Modernity in the Creative Industries*. London: Routledge.

O'Callaghan, C., 2012. Urban anxieties and creative tensions in the European Capital of Culture 2005:'It couldn't just be about Cork, like'. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 18(2), pp.185-204.

O'Connor, H. & Goodwin, J., 2010. Utilizing data from a lost sociological project: Experiences, insights, promises. *Qualitative Research, 10(3), ,* pp. 283-298.

O'Connor, H. & Goodwin, J., 2012. Revisiting Norbert Elias's sociology of community: learning from the Leicester re-studies. *The Sociological Review,* 60(3), pp. 476-497.

Oman, S. and Taylor, M., 2018. Subjective well-being in cultural advocacy: A politics of research between the market and the academy. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, *11*(3), pp.225-243.

Ooi, C. S., Håkanson, L. & LaCava, L., 2014. Poetics and politics of the European Capital of Culture Project. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 148, ,* pp. 420-427.

Peterson, R., 2005. Problems in comparative research: The example of omnivorousness. *Poetics,* Volume 33, p. 257–282.

REF2014, n.d. Impacts 08 – European Capital of Culture (ECoC) Research Programme impact case study. Available at: https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=7380# (accessed 4 July 2023).

Richards, G. & Palmer, R., 2010. *Eventful Cities: Cultural management and Urban Revitalisation*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Salkind, N. J., 2010. *Encyclopedia of research design.* 1 ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Santos, B. S., 2002. *Toward a New Legal Common Sense: Law, Globalization and Emancipation*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Seale, C., 1999. *The Quality of Qualitative Research. Introducing qualitative methods.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J. F. & Silverman, D., 2004. *Qualitative research practice*. London: SAGE Publications.

Sligo, J. L., Nairn, K. M. & McGee, R. O., 2018. Rethinking integration in mixed methods research using data from different eras: Lessons from a project about teenage vocational behaviour. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 21(1), pp. 63-75.

Sloan, L. & Quan-Haase, A., 2016. *The SAGE Handbook of social media research methods.* London: SAGE Publications.

Steiner, L., Frey, B. & Hotz, S., 2015. European capitals of culture and life satisfaction. *Urban Studies,* 52(2), pp. 374-394.

Taylor, M., 2016. Nonparticipation or different styles of participation? Alternative interpretations from Taking Part. *Cultural Trends, 25(3),* pp. 169-181.

Thomson, R., 2007. The Qualitative Longitudinal CaseHistory: Practical,Methodological and Ethical Reflections. *Social Policy and Society,* 6(4), pp. 571-582.

Wallstam, M., Ioannides, D. & Pettersson, R., 2020. Evaluating the social impacts of events: in search of unified indicators for effective policymaking. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events 12(2),* pp. 122-141.

Walmsley, B., 2012. Towards a balanced scorecard: A critical analysis of the Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme. *Cultural Trends, 21(4),* pp. 325-334.

Walmsley, B., 2018. Deep hanging out in the arts: An anthropological approach to capturing cultural value. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 24(2),* pp. 272-291.

West, T., 2021. Liverpool's European Capital of Culture legacy narrative: a selective heritage?. *European Planning Studies,* pp. 1-20.

West, H.M. and Scott-Samuel, A., 2010. Creative potential: mental well-being impact assessment of the Liverpool 2008 European capital of culture programme. *Public health*, *124*(4), pp.198-205.