REIMAGINING THE CITY: CULTURAL ADVOCACY, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF CMAP, PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA
Workshop
4 November 2015

'Reimagining the City', a project sponsored by the Cultural Institute at King's College London, brings together academic expertise from King's departments of English and Geography and arts practitioners from CMAP (Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform) in Port Harcourt to explore the possibility of mutual critique and feedback.

Opening Session

The day-long workshop which took place on Wednesday 4 November 2015, was designed to reflect on CMAP and, in particular, on the way in which its strategies of community participation, representation, and arts activism offer a model for enlisting the arts (as practice and theory) in the work of transforming informal settlements in the Global South into sustainable, resilient urban communities. Further, it examines the relationship between arts activism and collaborative design and planned communications. Exploring the synergies – and tensions – between art, design and advocacy is, therefore, part of what Reimagining the City sets out to explore.

Michael Uwemedimo, director of the Human City Project in Port Harcourt, began the day by establishing the context for the project. The cities of the Global South are in crisis. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and home to 15% of the continent's population, exemplifies the problem. Today, 79% of Nigeria's urban dwellers live in slums; by 2025, 60% of Nigerians will live in cities.[1] Meanwhile, a recurring pattern of evictions, mostly government led but increasingly involving PPPs, produces waves of man-made disasters: more than 2 million Nigerians have been evicted from informal settlements since 2000.[2] Yet, as the global population surges towards 8 billion and, for the first time, more people live in cities than in the countryside, the future stability not just of Nigeria but of the developing world will depend on the stability and fortunes of the city.

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[1] http://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/portfolio_page/people-live-here/; Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 1.
http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf
[2] http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/news-item/nigeria-slum-dwellers-victory-over-government-in-international-court-a-triumph-against-impunity
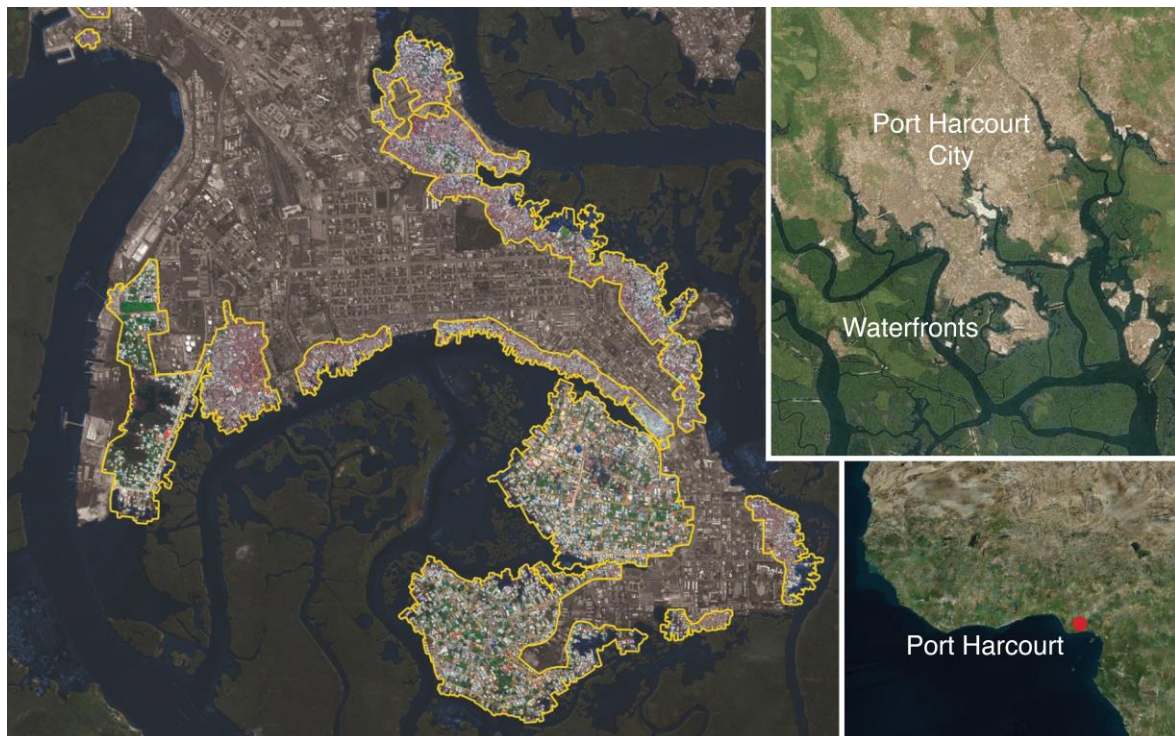
Figure 1: Aerial map highlighting some of Port Harcourt's 49 informal waterfront settlements, with inset maps showing their location in relation to Port Harcourt City and the Bite of Biafra

CMAP's Human City Project emerged as a response to large-scale evictions and demolitions in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's oil capital. Over the last 25 years, Port Harcourt's population has more than tripled, reaching 1.5 million in 2006. Roughly 480,000 people live in the city's 49 informal waterfront settlements (see Figure 1). These are largely self-built communities lacking any form of municipal infrastructure: no sewerage systems, no state health services, no formal engagement with government. The settlements stand upon land that the residents themselves reclaimed from the creeks, using a mixture of estuarine 'Chicoco' mud and refuse. The city was originally built on a laterite plateau; the surrounding waterfronts are between 5 and 15 metres lower than the rest of the city, adding another, very physical, marker of their spatial and social segregation.

In 2009, the Governor of Rivers State announced the planned demolition of Port Harcourt's informal waterfront settlements. These settlements were off the municipal maps. They featured on the city's development plan only as undifferentiated zones marked for demolition.[3] The resultant forced evictions and demolitions triggered not only widespread displacement but a conflict that threatened to become militant. Amnesty International asked Michael Uwemedimo, a documentary filmmaker, to record the demolitions. The

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[3] Satellite imagery and orthophotographs are not maps, *per se*; they are photographs that are often used as base imagery for maps. Informal settlements figure on these photographs simply because informal settlements are as visible from the sky as the rest of the city – though, due to density, not necessarily as legible. The question is, how are they mapped, by whom and to what ends? And how aren't they mapped? Though the lanes of the informal settlements don't figure on city street maps, for example, they sometimes do appear on municipal maps.

resulting film effectively marks the emergence of CMAP and the start of Uwemedimo's engagement with community activists.[4]

That first, seven-minute film documents the bulldozing of the Njemanze settlement in August 2009. Nene Briggs, a former Njemanze resident, provides the voice-over. Briggs, tracked by the camera, guides us frantically through an ongoing demolition where we see military personnel and heavy machinery moving into position; residents are scrambling to save their possessions before their homes are destroyed. Bulldozers roll in, demolishing buildings. Afterwards, Briggs picks her way across the aftermath of demolition, through a flattened wasteland of broken concrete, twisted sheets of corrugated iron, splintered planks, plastic, mud, puddles:

> After they demolished my place, I don't have anywhere to stay... I didn't expect that that day they'd come to demolish that place with the bulldozer. So now I hang around with my children, with six children. I hang around. I don't have a place to stay... Me, I'm not a lazy woman. I'm not a criminal. I'm not a militant. I'm a struggling woman. I do business. I do petty trade: rice, beans, tomatoes. I sell. I go to Aba, the market, to buy things and sell. I'm not a lazy woman. I'm an industrious woman. I do business. I'm a struggling woman. And now the government frustrates me... All my property was scattered. My things, my business was scattered. No way now to even start the business. No way to manage, no way even to put my children in school. That place is our home, where we were brought up. Are we supposed to be refugees in our own lands?

It's striking how little attention man-made disasters, like demolition, attract in comparison to natural calamities, as Uwemedimo pointed out when showing stills from subsequent

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[4] http://www.cmapping.net/they-came-with-their-bulldozers-they-came-with-their-soldiers/ and http://www.slumstories.org/episode/nigeria-–-silverbird-showtime

demolitions (e.g. figure 2):

Figure 2: The Njemanze Demolition August 28, 2009

> If these were images of a natural disaster, if they were images taken after a tsunami
> or an earthquake, I think that the scale of the human impact would be immediately
> sensed... There's a tendency with demolitions and forced evictions to think of them
> as a technical, domestic-policy measure. There's a real disconnect with the very
> immediate, very profound, massive human impacts. I think that's really important
> for us to understand because what's happening in Port Harcourt, although it has its
> particular political and historical detail, is essentially something that is happening in
> cities across the developing world.

A subsequent image shows a young woman retrieving two business textbooks, from the site
of her demolished home; *Marketing in Travel and Tourism and The Audit Process* speak to
dreams that have been levelled but, judging by the determination on the student's face, not
demolished by the bulldozers.

Figure 3: A waterfront resident returns to the site of her demolished home to retrieve textbooks, *Marketing in Travel and Tourism* and *The Audit Process*.

As Uwemedimo explained, the government had a straightforward rationale for the demolitions:

> The logic is something like this: slums are ugly, so if you destroy them the city will be more beautiful. Slums are full of poor people, so if you demolish them the city will be less poor

This unanswerable logic was matched by the belligerent approach of Governor Amaechi of Rivers State. Amaechi announced his intention to send in armed force to move people out of their homes, in order for them to be bulldozed, in uncompromising terms:

> When I am coming, mobile men will be there with their guns; policemen will be there with their guns; army will bring their own; air force will bring their own; navy will bring their own, for me to take back *my land*.

His claim to be taking 'back *my land*' drives from a particular constitutional anomaly: the 1978 land-use decree, issued by the military junta, vested all urban land in trust to the governor. Constitutionally, then, the governor can , personally, give or withhold certificates of occupancy. Technically, he owns the land.

Film As Activism

CMAP quickly realised that it needed to move from opposition to proposition. Instead of merely resisting demolitions – an urgent and necessary task – it also needed to chart a coherent future for the waterfronts by involving the residents in imagining, representing, and planning a model of inclusive, resilient and sustainable urbanisation. The signature of that response – and the reason why the project is of significance for the Cultural Institute – is that it is based around arts and media advocacy. The standard model of urban regeneration sees

creative practice as ancillary to economic and physical infrastructural development. From the start, however, CMAP has used film, radio and, increasingly, music as the driver of development: all are deployed to enable excluded communities to represent their experience and to collectively plan their future.

Documentary filmmaking and film screenings were at the heart of the project. From the outset, residents in waterfront communities recognised the camera and screen as instruments they could enlist in support of their struggle. Equally, film has been central to the creation of a public sphere in the Habermasian sense. From the start, Uwemedimo was struck by how the individuals he encountered in filming the Njemanze demolitions, instinctively *directed* his shots:

> People immediately directed me. They saw my camera and they immediately directed the camera. They recognised the camera as an instrument that they could use to frame their issue... If you had tried previously to go into any of these communities with a camera, you physically would not have been able to... [But] in this situation, people immediately recognised the camera as something they could use. Part of the reason for that is because of where the camera was... The lines were drawn very clearly; the police and the bulldozers were on one side and the community was on the other. The camera was on the side of the community. They recognised it as *their* camera.

'Their' camera could show the waterfront, long typecast as squalid and dangerous, in a more nuanced light; it could make a community which had been treated as invisible suddenly *visible*. When Uwemedimo screened the demolition footage, stamped with Amnesty International's logo, to the community, they didn't just see themselves, but they saw themselves as *seen*.[5] Building on that experience, CMAP set up its first community arts venue, in the form of a pop-up cinema which screened not only locally made documentaries but classics of world cinema: Chicoco Cinema was born (see Figure 4).[6] In a settlement with few public spaces, the cinema didn't just allow the community to represent itself and see itself represented; it created a peripatetic public space from which community-based advocacy could emerge.

[5] The campaign to make the waterfront community visible to the rest of Port Harcourt and, by extension, to a wider global community, resulted in the 'People Live Here' campaign which covered billboards and city buses with photographs of waterfront residents; see http://www.people-live-here.org/

[6] The films screened include *Modern Times, City Lights, The Kid, Dear Mandela, A Place in the City, Black November,* and all Chicoco productions.

Figure 4: A recent screening on the floating cinema

Uwemedimo captures the dynamic:

> What we are seeing on the screen is the community that the screen is in... When people see themselves – when the kids see themselves and recognise their classmates – there's this scream of delight. That scream of recognition is really what drives Chicoco Cinema. The idea that people can frame themselves.

Chicoco Radio

It quickly became clear, however, that the community wanted not only to be seen but to be *heard*. People who lacked a voice – but who articulated their resistance to eviction and demolition vocally and, in particular, through song – were quick to see the potential of radio. Here was a medium that would bring their community together and allow them to

reach out to the rest of the city. And so Chicoco Radio was born. Here again, as with the cinema, was a medium that required a dedicated space: production and broadcast studios, transmitter and mast. So the idea to build a radio station and media centre was born. This would be a large-scale design intervention, a building on a civic scale. However, before making a major architectural intervention, CMAP wanted to demonstrate intent and to trial the construction process through making a small-scale space. This became the Media Shed. (Figure 5). The Shed was an opportunity to create the first designed public space within the waterfront, to introduce simple spatial ideas with big impacts, to introduce colour and greenery. It allowed CMAP to test local supply chains and work with volunteer labour. It would provide a townhall, exhibition space, recreational areas, as well as a radio training studio: a place to gather, debate, plan, play and learn.

The Shed has become a venue for townhall meetings, birthday parties, concerts, table tennis, whisky drinking, serious Scrabble competitions, visits by health officials, events staged by local cultural groups, telephone battery charging (it runs on solar power), a hangout for young couples in the evening, as well as the training and planning activities of Chicoco Radio and Chicoco Maps. The exhibition space includes designs of the building that will replace it: Chicoco Space.

Chicoco Space

It was important that the radio station was not only a place from which people could speak out, but that it was also a space that itself spoke; that the building itself spoke of the capacity of the community to contribute to the development process... We didn't want it to be a building in the idiom of 'good enough', functional development architecture.

Figure 5: The Radio shed, which includes a radio studio, climbing wall and a space for public meetings and events. It is powered by solar panels, delivering the 'silent power' crucial for radio production.

The design of Chicoco Space answers to the transformative vision of Sergio Fajardo, the Mayor of Medellin, whose insistence that 'Our most beautiful buildings must be in our poorest areas' became a cornerstone of the Colombian city's regeneration policy .[7] The Shed and its planned sequel provide a civic space where the community can develop its vision for the future through an iterative process of participatory democracy. The responsive design process of Chicoco Space is particularly notable. Before spatial designs were discussed, the community was encouraged to consider the values, histories and hopes they wanted the building to embody. The design process was always framed by a broader engagement with the site, neighbourhood and city – residents discussed both the spatial and the social impacts they hoped their media centre would have on the neighbourhood and city at large. The design firm NLÉ its plans through a participatory workshop process with the waterfronts communities, presenting several designs that were put to a vote. The preferred design was 'A Bridge to Transformation' (figures 6 & 7). Promise Kirikenabere, the former community chairman who advocated for the donation of communal land for the project, called the planned building 'a bridge to the world'.

The structure is conceived as a linear composition of public spaces from land to water: a community radio station, recording studios, computer centre, meeting rooms, amphitheatre and cinema. The radio broadcast mast is an integrated architectural component which lifts the structure like a bridge: it launches one end of the building into the water and suspends

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[7] http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/15/world/americas/15medellin.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

the other in the air. The waterside of the building is a floating stage and jetty which rises and falls with the ebb and flow of the tide. The building will eventually contain Chicoco Radio's recording studios and editing suites, a computer centre, meeting rooms and a cinema. The cantilevered studios open a shaded landscaped area beneath them - an 'open public space beneath a place of open public debate'.
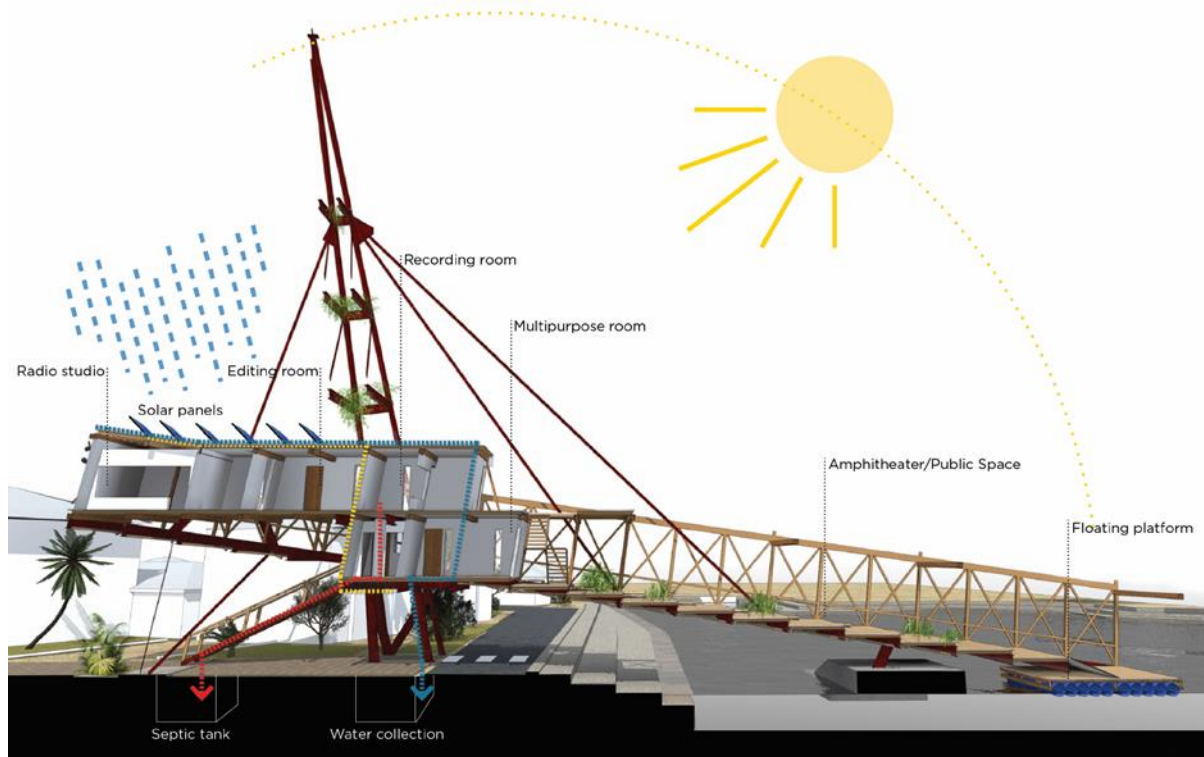

Figure 6: Proposals for 'A Bridge to Transformation'

The structure incorporates renewable energy systems. The concept and design development stages have been closely guided by the local communities: CMAP have involved hundreds of residents in design workshops, focus groups and discussions over a number of years.
As a 'bridge to transformation', the amphibious nature of the building offers a reconnection between the communities' life on land and their historic connection with the water. Anchored in the bay of Okrika waterfront and reaching up towards the 'upland' city, the building establishes a trajectory along which large areas of intense informal growth will be integrated into a more inclusive vision of the city's future.

The radio station will be the first community-owned commercial station in Nigeria. The initiative is formally owned by a nationally registered board of trustees of waterfront residents. The design, development, training and production programmes that lead to the station's launch have already become the driver of community self-representation. They have been central to forging a more unified community identity across all the waterfront settlements – a profound challenge against deeply entrenched ethnic rivalries. Community ambassadors from across the city gathered at the Shed for a series of studio open days and hands-on studio sessions. The participant selection process ensured representation from all settlements and every ethnicity. One Chicoco Radio drama series – 'Many Voices Make a

City' – addresses issues of inclusive, community-led development and democratic design;[8] its musical output, broadcast for now on partner commercial stations, means that the voices of the waterfront people are heard throughout Port Harcourt.

Figure 7: Artist's impression of 'A Bridge to Transformation'

The station has already attracted prominent artists. The singer-songwriter Mr2Kay, born in a Port Harcourt waterfront, came to sing in and about Chicoco Radio.[9] Mark LeVine, a musician and history professor, also visited the Shed and was astonished by what he found. LeVine had been working with revolutionary musicians in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Iran for a new arrangement of Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti's 'No Agreement'.[10] He came to the station intending to get musicians and singers working at Chicoco Radio to record just sixteen bars for the new track. However, as Uwemedimo put it, "their train had no breaks". What LeVine captured was a nine-minute impromptu jam session, which attests to the creative and musical talent emerging from and being fostered by Chicoco Radio.[11] LeVine is due to return to the waterfronts to develop a programme called 'Sessions at the Shed'.

Extending Definitions of 'Representation'

As CMAP's vision developed, its understanding of its key concept, 'representation', became ever more nuanced and layered. In the first instance CMAP had set out to investigate the capacity of a community-based film advocacy practice to facilitate community mobilisation and organisation. How might this practice inform the ways in which waterfront communities see themselves and imagine their future? In what ways might it afford them

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[8] The comedic radio drama 'Map my Soup' proved popular with listeners and extolled the benefits of participatory mapping projects in the waterfronts; available (in pidgin) at https://soundcloud.com/chicoco-radio/many-voices-make-a-city-2

[9] ChicocoGaga – Mr2Kay; available at https://soundcloud.com/chicoco-radio/chicocogaga-mr2kay

[10] Fela Kuti's original 'No Agreement': https://youtu.be/PiBnIsh5YzM

[11] No Agreement – Sessions from the Shed; available at https://soundcloud.com/chicoco-radio/no-agreement-sessions-at-the-shed

means of wresting control over how their communities are represented and how their city is planned and shaped?

The issue of representation in and through film led directly to the project's other concerns with representation: how might vision and voice respond to each other as a radio platform is developed? How might the representation of these communities on the screen and on air be involved not only in how residents see, show and tell stories about their communities, but also how they design and build them? In building 'platforms for community voice and vision', what connections are there between media practice and an architecture project? How might a concern with audiovisual and architectural representation of these communities inform their representation on municipal charts and master plans? How is their representation on maps linked to their representation in law? And how do these other representational spheres inform the dynamics of political representation?

The salience of these representational concerns was violently illustrated by the shooting at Bundu waterfront. On 12th October 2009, Rivers State Government agents entered Bundu waterfront to enumerate – a process that involves marking each structure. Protesters – who saw enumeration as a precursor to demolition – were shot by police. The often-violent resistance to enumeration by waterfront communities stems in part from their perception that these exercises reduced the value of their communities to the commercial value of the properties in them. Government enumeration and mapping exercises do not capture the values, priorities or problems which waterfront communities regard as important to them. Municipal authorities do not draw these homes into their charts; they mark them directly in order to erase them. This 'marking of houses' precipitated a crisis of representation that is at once graphic, cartographic, cultural and political.

CMAP had distributed Flip video cameras to community members at the protest in Bundu. Footage shot by those who were shot at was used as evidence in a case against the federal and state governments in the ECOWAS Regional Court of Justice. Not on the map, but represented in an international court, litigation is one instrument of a political struggle around which the community is mobilising. Here the struggle is not so much to claim formal rights but to occupy an actual place. The project sets out to describe what CMAP terms a 'narrative geography', one that is both critical and interventionist.

Here film documentary, cartographic and legal representation are intertwined. Not only was footage shot by protestors used as evidence in the trial, but films were subsequently made with those that were shot and these were used in the advocacy programme that attended the trial. One of these films features Joy Williams. Joy, then only seventeen years old, had been shot in the leg by a stray bullet while making breakfast in her kitchen. She was awarded 2m Naira in compensation by the court. Her film test many is a performance of remarkable exuberance and power, Joy describes both the shooting and her feelings towards the soldier who shot her: she insists that she feels no malice towards someone who was simply doing what he was told to do – and doing it well.[12]

The film, which was used by Amnesty International as part of their global campaign on forced evictions as well as screened in local communities, encapsulates what Uwemedimo

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[12] http://www.cmapping.net/bundu-joy/

calls 'the inherently violent model of urbanisation that CMAP seeks to challenge, as well as demonstrating the way in which the project tries to offer a different model'. At the launch of the 'People Live Here' campaign, Joy gave a speech that epitomises CMAP's approach to participatory development:

> I could not walk, but I could speak.
> Now I can walk and I am still speaking.
>
> I was shot, but I am not a victim. I am an advocate.
>
> I am young, but I know that development should not come with guns and bullets.
> I am the future of this city.
>
> My government needs me as a partner.

Cartographic Representation

So far, CMAP had deployed representation, the cornerstone of its policy and strategy, to enable a marginalised community to represent themselves to the forces that impinge on their lives. It had begun with documentaries of demolitions; it used film screenings to bring people together; its radio station consolidated that sense of critical community by broadcasting their own voices; gradually, its definition of 'representation' had expanded to include legal representation. One crucial way in which the waterfront communities were not represented, however, was cartographically. CMAP developed a participatory mapping programme to allow waterfront residents to give voice to their experience of Port Harcourt, to literally put themselves on the map and to participate meaningfully in the shaping of their city. As ever, the planning phase was communal, democratic and iterative.

Maps and mapping in Port Harcourt play a significant role in a sometimes violent contest over how the city is represented, serviced, shaped and inhabited. And mapping and maps will inevitably play an important role in determining its future. CMAP's participatory mapping programme presents viable forms of political intervention and social expression as an alternative to violence. Moreover, it creates links between the development and sensitisation phase of the large-scale participatory digital mapping project and the existing community radio and practice of collaborative urban planning.

Waterfront communities have a strategically sophisticated sense of issues of representation and therefore understand the ways in which participatory mapping is empowering. They understand that evidenced-based advocacy can be extremely effective. They understand that when local knowledge is supported by accurate statistics it becomes more credible to government officials. They recognise that having more information allows them to develop an increasingly propositional stance about their own development. This increases their confidence, encourages them to be less defensive and more open to collaboration.

Volunteers from the Darick Polo waterfront were the first to receive training as part of CMAP's cartographic programme. Participants surveyed the settlements, recording details such as building use and type. Volunteers were trained to use QGIS mapping software. The resulting digital maps are extraordinarily data rich; geo-referenced points on the maps contain photographs, GPS information, altitude data, roof/wall types and building purposes.

The residents of Darick Polo own this data and will decide how best to use it. For the next stage of the project, community mappers will return to every house and business in the community to collect information about population, health, education and access to services. Recognising the inadequacy of purely quantitative data, volunteers will also take pictures and record interviews to enable the maps to better 'tell the story' of daily life in the waterfronts.

The representational impulse of the mapping project meant that narrative geography was always part of its vision. Recently, the Google Street View team announced its intention to develop a collaboration with the waterfront communities through Street View. This opens up rich possibilities for developing such a narrative geography – and in ways that could be played out during the return leg of the 'Cultural Institute: Reimagining the City' project, as will be seen below.

WORKSHOP 1: GENTRIFICATION AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The first session of the afternoon addressed the question of whether improvements such as the Shed and the proposed Radio Centre necessarily bring with them a risk of gentrification. It explored how that risk might be avoided, resisted or mitigated. It asked how the rights of marginalised, informal communities might be protected and how an inclusive, sustainable model of urbanisation might be developed

Alex Loftus, Geography Department, King's College London (chair):
- ➢ 'Gentrification' was first used by Ruth Glass in 1960s to describe the movement of more economically advantaged groups back into the inner cities.
- ➢ Gentrification is a contested concept: it can be seen as either destructive, evidence of capitalism's ability to move in and exploit places hollowed out by poverty or, more optimistically, as regenerative.
- ➢ Most research on gentrification has been conducted in Global North and so the relevance of the concept for a city like Port Harcourt cannot be presumed.
- ➢ What is certain, however, is that conditions conducive to gentrification now exist in the Global South: as the barriers to international finance came down, capital became globally available. That enabled new forms of speculation which facilitates new kinds of land grabbing.
- ➢ There is an important link between infrastructure and gentrification. CMAP builds new infrastructures in order to resist eviction. But the danger is that these very improvements could now pave the way to gentrification: since infrastructure increases the value of properties in the area, it runs the risk of being coopted by speculators and gentrifiers.
- ➢ Questions for further discussion: How best to resist evictions? How to contest land speculation? What part does infrastructure play in this process?

Michael Uwemedimo, Filmmaker and Director of CMAP:
The design process (of the Shed, the community mapping etc.) was communal and participatory; from the start there was an anxiety about these issues: something that

residents mentioned early on in the process was that this building would likely improve the area and that improving the area would likely increase rents.

- ➤ Landlords tended to be unreservedly in favour of infrastructure developments and somewhat more suspicious of information initiatives (such as mapping). They were unequivocal in evaluating infrastructural developments positively, as progress.
- ➤ Tenants were quicker to identify potential risks, but they also calculated that it would bring increased commercial opportunities, increased footfall.
- ➤ They also valued the idea that it would 'improve' the city, which was seen as inherent good.
- ➤ Tenants tend to participate more in the mapping programmes than landlords.

Ana Bonaldo, Radio Engineer; Director of Audio Programmes, CMAP:
- ➤ Residents mentioned that new buildings would help the city see them in a different light, as people who can construct and build something that is not only good for a slum, but that would be good anywhere.

Fubara Samuel Tokubiye, Community Engagement Manager, CMAP (via Skype link from Port Harcourt):
- ➤ One of the project's key principles was that it should begin with a space where residents could discuss and plan.
- ➤ We have to ensure not only that bulldozers don't push people out, but that money doesn't push them out.

Ruth Craggs, Geography Department, King's College London:
- ➤ Has the erection of the Shed brought any negative outcomes in its wake?

Michael:
- ➤ Prior to building the media shed it was a dead space. It was the route to the toilet. Now, people play there. There are Scrabble tournaments; traders sell their wares there and business is lively.
- ➤ Now that the threat of demolition has receded and there is greater security, rents have gone up and lots are selling quickly. Indeed, it is becoming difficult for the project to find spaces to rent. This is, of course, an indicator of increased confidence; but it's not without its own risks. One of the things we were trying to do was to say, "This is a nice place to live; it's a community; it's vibrant". But this is a double-edged sword.
- ➤ One important consideration is the nature of tenure in Nigeria. All land is, officially, owned by the state. The community where our project is sited was actually in part sand-filled by the government and then allocated to the community. That allocation process was coopted in different ways by groups with different kinds of power – from community leaders who used bureaucracy to their personal gain (self-allocation of plots, for example) or to gangs of young men who extracted rents or 'permissions fees' from people who had bought plots. So there is a tension between 'formal' and 'informal' allocation and tenure systems
- ➤ Because of the lack of clarity surrounding tenure, CMAP has always been scrupulous in seeking official planning permission.

Patricia Palmer, Department of English, King's College London:

> ➤ Where does the threat of gentrification come from? From within the community or outside it?

Michael:
> ➤ There is no clear inside and outside, and no simple threat. For instance, at the top of the road there is a modern housing development that has been more or less empty for six or seven years. It's been empty because nobody who can afford to pay rent to live there wants to live there. So simply introducing infrastructure doesn't inevitably lead to an influx of a new, wealthier population that pushes out the poorer inhabitants.
> ➤ There are politicians and people of means who own properties in the waterfronts. So it is important to understand that these neighbourhoods are not zones of uniform poverty – some are relatively affluent already; all are involved in an economy that in some cases makes some people a lot of money; moreover, they are part of political and ethnic networks that cut across class.
> ➤ And then there are complex relationships between tenants and landlords, between different ethnicities, between those that identify primarily with the waterfront as their community and those that identify with another place as their 'village'.
> ➤ Central to the project has been the desire to create a new kind of community, based around the values of the project. The approach has been to open up a space – physical and cultural – that is inclusive. It does not take account of community affiliation or identities outside of that space. So, for example, two young men who might belong to different cult groups [gangs] work side by side in the studio; two women who might be from communities that are raiding each other, will collaborate on a mapping mission.

Deborah Potts, Geography Department, King's College London:
> ➤ There are differences between processes of gentrification in London, San Francisco, etc. where the nature of the real estate is such that it can be made very attractive to external investors, and the Global South.
> ➤ Michael's evidence makes her feel even more strongly that that is the case:
> ➤ Michael said earlier that it was 'inconceivable' that this community will be knocked down because it is so big and there are so many people there. That confers its own protection.
> ➤ Moreover, many of the processes in such a community, such as the blurring of tenure and its general informality, mitigate against gentrification. It contrasts with, say, the UK where small housing estates can be easily picked off.
> ➤ Material condition in Port Harcourt are, clearly, extremely difficult, but there is a certain 'power' attached to such informal settlements.

Adewale Ajadi, Lawyer/writer/diversity consultant; Non-Executive Director, CMAP:
> ➤ To some extent the security Debbie talks of depends on the timeline.
> ➤ The success of a community project and the way it builds a sense of community can exercise a powerful pull on outsiders who are attracted in to such a vibrant place. In the long run, therefore, things can begin to change fundamentally.
> ➤ The symbolic nature of the project and its effects – creativity, community, sense of wellbeing, security – have a profound effect on the aspirational pull of an area.

Sagar Sumaria, Consultant, *Sow, Grow and Reap*:
  ➢ If new businesses are being attracted in, what role does/should the government have in enforcing regulation? Would the authorities not be keen, given the opportunity presented by the newcomers and the increased economic activity, to develop the taxation base in the area?

Michael:
  ➢ There is no effective tax base in Nigeria. The government has no interest in being dependent on tax revenues which would entail accountability – not when oil revenue is available. 90% of government funding comes from oil revenue; 85% of foreign exchange comes from the same source. Lagos is the only state that generates revenue from taxation – and it is the only one that is not bankrupt.
  ➢ Government regulation is anathema (with good reason). The idea that you would seek permission to build, the idea that an individual or a community's development might, in some way, be regulated, is an alien concept.
  ➢ For generations, people have learned that they cannot trust their representatives.

Adewale:
  ➢ Here we see one of the reasons why the project is so important: it raises questions and starts a conversation about what kind of government people want.

Alex:
  ➢ Returning to Debbie's point about 'gentrification' not being a particularly helpful term to make sense of what is taking place in Port Harcourt, what tools do we have to make sense of a situation where an infrastructural project that brings important improvements might also lead to greater insecurity for those living in the area?

Caspaer Jones, Senior Lecturer, Interior Design/Public Space Design, Liverpool John Moores University:
  ➢ Here we are in London, where gentrification of a classic type is everywhere to be seen.
  ➢ Which way is the learning coming from in this project? If we say, as Debbie mentioned, that 'gentrification' is a poor conceptual tool to apply in this case, then the learning is coming from the activity in Port Harcourt. It's coming from the practice there.
  ➢ How does the complex informal system seen on the waterfront help us to better understand the dynamics of informality? That is very different to seeking to make the informal formal. It raises the question of how we extract what is valuable from the informal system, such as its adaptive nature.

Michael:
  ➢ Practice is the only solution. We are not setting out to formalise the informal. It's about creating a new engagement, a new recognition and a new understanding of the dynamics of informality. These are the dynamics that are shaping the cities that we live in. This is the reality of the core urban condition.

Adewale:
It's possible for people not to look at material considerations – speculation on land and property – but to look at other values in order to start to construct something new.

Michael:

If we are trying to change what we are facing, we have to change it in the face of that reality.

<p style="text-align:center">Environmental issues</p>

Michael:

➢ Environmental issues are central to everything. There is no meaningful environmental regulation in Nigeria. An equivalent of one Exxon Valdez disaster has happened in the Niger Delta every year since the 1960s.

➢ This lack of regulation, this space that Mike Watts calls the 'permanent frontier', where there is a collision of wealth, despoliation, poverty and violence, where the law and the outlaws cooperate as much as they compete, produces a kind of epistemic murk which allows the extractive industries to thrive without oversight. The only way out is accountability. It will only emerge when there is a community demand from the people who live there.

➢ Part of the project, therefore, is to develop an actual waterfront. This community identifies as a water community, but there is no official waterfront. Land just disappears into sludge. We need to give the waterfront definition, to build a walkway, benches, etc. That kind of infrastructure is needed to change perceptions, to frame the water as a valuable resource.

Pat:

➢ There is an interesting question about the role of the aesthetic here. The residents of the waterfront are already living on polluted water. Is it only if they are sitting on a bench looking at the view that it becomes important for the water to be clean?

Michael:

➢ How do you create a situation where people will create a better space for themselves without reducing the situation to 'self-help' – because, to be clear, it is beyond the capacity of the community to provide municipal sewage works or other kinds of infrastructure that it is the role of the government to provide. Reducing everything to 'self-help' tends to evacuate the political content of the issue.

➢ If people become conscious of their own environment and create a better place for themselves, e.g. by reducing litter, they can then push their demands upwards. If you do that you can say to your representative 'this is how we are taking care of our community, we need you to do X, Y and Z. And furthermore we have a plan for that. Here are the statistics. Here are the maps. Will you partner with us on it?'

Ruth:

➢ Has the fact that the project has been so successful changed government perceptions and willingness to engage?

Michael:

➢ The current political situation is in flux.

- We will almost certainly get greater traction with the current administration than we did with the previous administration. They have a much better understanding of the potential benefits of this project.
- The civil service and government technical staff has always received us positively. These people have often trained to be agents of development, not agents of demolition.
- We are likely to be in a position, with the new administration, to help these people to attain more leverage with the executive.

Rachel Baker, participatory arts practitioner, involved in London housing campaigns[13]:
- When you think of campaigns in London, often centred on specific estates, one tactic used by the speculators is to divide communities by picking off individual residents by offering them unilateral deals.
- On the other hand, women have been to the fore in housing campaigns in London. Are there parallels with Port Harcourt?

Michael:
- The same divide and conquer tactic happens in Port Harcourt.
- The role of women is interesting. At a community level, women are well represented. There are women's reps on every committee. But while women are well represented as a community sanctioned group, individual women or groups of women have much less space to act beyond this sanctioned collective identity. Roles are sanctioned by the community, within established community frameworks. But there is a question about how to negotiate another space for women's engagement, outside that community space. How do you create a space where a young woman can engage without having to seek permission? This is something we have been thinking about for years.

Adewale:
- There is also an issue of class and class solidarity. If the middle class could only see how close they are to the predicament of the poor…

WORKSHOP 2: (RE) SHAPING THE CITY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PRACTICE

This session asked how marginalised people in at-risk communities might be enabled to participate meaningfully in (re-)shaping their cities. What tools exist to facilitate such participation? Might a model be extrapolated from CMAP's practices that could be

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[13] https://www.cptheatre.co.uk/wp_theatre_season/whose-london/

adopted/adapted by other marginalised communities, as the basis for creating broader, more inclusive participatory movements?

Adewale Ajadi, Non-Executive Director, CMAP (chair):
How would we frame a successful practice for participation? Is such participation about consultation or about ownership?
There is often a tension between what people want and what NGOs or outside experts think they need.
You cannot direct a living organism; you can only disturb it.

Alex Watson, MA: Theatre and Performance, King's College, London:
Is there a way of – and is there a value in – involving better-off, middle-class citizens who live in other parts of Port Harcourt in the project?

Michael:
➢ Most of our discussions revolve around how to engage different groups and individuals within the community.
➢ We also talk about engaging government, academics, etc; creating a space for 'middle-class' involvement has not been something we've focussed on.
➢ The 'People Live Here' campaign did, however, engage with the better-off citizens of Port Harcourt, in an attempt to challenge and change their perceptions of the waterfront. That could be seen as a sort of engagement with the 'middle classes'.
➢ Up until now, the project has mainly focused on creating a new space for agency. Engaging other, outside groups may become more important as the project sets about building a significant public facility like the Radio Centre

Ana:
➢ Even though the project didn't directly target people from other parts of Port Harcourt, there has been some involvement. For example, while one of the criteria for participation in various radio training programmes is that participants must come from the waterfront communities, we were surprised to have applicants from outside the waterfront. We hadn't imagined that these people would be interested. And so we allowed them to sign up – they make the same commitments to volunteer their time after training as everyone else.
➢ When people from the community interact with others, they become very interested in what is going on.

Precious Abi, Activist, Volunteer, Law Student, CMAP (via Skype link from Port Harcourt):
We had a class and while we were learning somebody did something they ought not to have done. The lecturer said, 'Don't behave like a waterside person.' I was there coming from the waterside so I stood up and I told her 'I'm coming from the waterside.' Good people come from the waterside [but] here in the city we believe that if you are coming from the waterside you are not coming from the best of places. People look down on us and stereotype us. There is a kind of behaviour or attitude that is expected of you. When someone behaves in a way they ought not to behave, they tag you as a waterside person. Over the time that I have been in school, I have been interacting with my fellow students and telling them about the project. Over time I have come to understand that it is just a

matter of understanding, an idea that people have… From me being there as a student, it makes people believe that something really is going on here… The distinction between us and the upper class – let me use the word 'upper class' – is very clear… But when people from the outside hear about what we are doing, they want to come down here and they want to be a part of it.

Ashley Crowson, Research Student, Department of Geography, King's College London:
Is there a movement away from making the local community globally visible (as in the 'People Live Here' campaign)?

Michael:
- ➢ No. The workshop today is part of that attempt to make the community more widely visible. As a result of such visibility, there is a political shift locally as well. If you make a small community globally visible, it changes the political calculus.
- ➢ Moreover, as facilities are built in the waterfront, we want this kind of event to happen there. It has always been an explicit aim of the project to increase social and spatial integration in the city. We want people to come to the communities, to have a reason to come, and for the community to have a space for receiving them.
- ➢ Music, too, can be part of that outreach. We aim to have well known musicians come to the Shed. We want sessions at the Shed to become an established part of the music scene. Community participation is a collaboration and the nature of the project that emerges reflects the skills and interests of the participants.
- ➢ One of the reasons why we are building a radio station and a cinema, as opposed to a clinic, is because we're filmmakers and radio engineers, not doctors… We have interests; it is a meeting of those interests and a conversation around those interests that really drives the project.

Nse Esema, Program Director, Community Innovators Lab, MIT (via Skype link):
- ➢ How is CMAP engaging the very ethnically mixed communities of the waterfronts? Is this an area in which tensions arise?

Michael:
The waterfront is ethnically mixed.

Fubara Samuel Tokubiye, Community Engagement Manager, CMAP (via Skype link from Port Harcourt):
- ➢ We agreed that the radio station board would be made up of people from at least four different ethnic groups and at least four women and four men.
- ➢ The project is not about ethnic groups. The project is about people.

Precious:
When my lecturer said 'you are behaving like a waterfront person', she wasn't considering an ethnic group, she was thinking of an attitude or behaviour that [in her mind] comes from the waterfronts. We all go through the same thing… People see you as a different person from [the people of] the city. We believe that this friction, this tension, is something that we can manage between us… If you come to the waterside and there is no road for you to walk

on, whether you are from the North, whether you are from Okrika, you suffer the same problem... Wherever you come from, the enemy is common.

Michael:
- Diversity is written into the project, in its constitution and in the way its programmes are designed.
- The waterfront, however, is more ethnically homogenous than some communities that have been demolished and it has a unified leadership. One of the reasons why we can say that it is 'inconceivable' that the community would be bulldozed out of existence is because of that unified waterfront identity.
- However, it is likely that when the mapping is concluded, it will show that there is much more diversity than previously assumed.
- The project has self-consciously deployed a discourse of fundamental rights from the very outset. It makes sense, strategically, to use that language, given that the project is all about creating a shared space.

Sustainability and Replicability of the Project

Sagar Sumaria:
- Are urban farms part of the project?

Michael:
- Public space is. And that entails the greening of spaces. There is a need to find creative solutions in a context where any unoccupied space is seen as a waste of space; but rooftops, for example, might have potential in that respect.

Robert Hollingsworth, Stakeholder Democracy Network:
- Can this project be replicated, and if so, how?

Hannah Cane, Project Officer, Stakeholder Democracy Network:
- Exactly! Where does the project go from here? How can sustainability be built into its fabric?

Michael:
Michael seems deeply ambivalent about question of replicability.
- This a deeply organic process. How does one distinguish the model from the people who brought it into being? It's more about synergies, about the coming together of particular people with particular skills and vision. How can one extract a replicable model from something so organic, so particular? To understand the model, one would have to study the people involved and the nature of their encounters. Planners are finding they need to be less prescriptive and more observant, descriptive – they need a good dose of ethnography.
- As for sustainability, the project as it is certainly can deliver its promised 'outputs'. But, the big question is what happens beyond the delivery of immediate outputs? Vision and nightmare battle for supremacy when it comes to imagining what the project will look like five years after the grant period has ended. Is there a way of engineering or controlling that? Michael's instinct is that all one can do is trust in the

relationships that are being built and in the energy of people and the systems put in place to maintain the spaces that will have been created.

➢ Specifically, the media centre, Chicoco Space, will be a viable facility, available for recording demos and hosting functions; we will have created a space from where a culture industry can grow.

➢ Part of sustainability is going to be a programme of continuing engagement with donors.

Hannah Cane:
Is the centre economically sustainable? Could it go on to facilitate job creation, which is key in Port Harcourt?

Michael:
➢ What we are building would be challenging anywhere. It has events space, radio production facilities, a cinema, etc.

➢ Community buy-in is the key to sustainability. In Port Harcourt musicians pay 20,000-30,000 Naira to make a demo CD. We can do that for half the price, with better facilities and much better producers. People have christenings and weddings here. We are confident that this will become a very popular facility and there will be revenue.

➢ The project's engagement with the existing community leadership is strong – but what happens when the project is handed back to the community without CMAP funding?

➢ Ghetto Radio in Nairobi employs twenty people and makes 300,000 US Dollars profit a year. With that it funds other initiatives.

➢ I think, however, that we will probably need continued engagement with donors of some kind. That might be federal state or local government or a more traditional international donor.

Ashley:
➢ Is there a conflict between local and external 'knowledge'?

Michael:
➢ My father was Nigerian and my mother English, so the local has always been part of a moment.

➢ I've never fetishized the local. Port Harcourt is part of the world. So if it forms relationships with overseas organisations, that's normal. This is one of the largest cities in Africa's most populous nation in the 21st century. If people in Okrika waterfront develop a relationship with Amnesty or the Ford Foundation, fine!

➢ We are trying to equip people with strategic resources to negotiate those relationships.

Caspaer Jones, Senior Lecturer, Interior Design/Public Space Design, Liverpool John Moores University:
➢ When you have a successful model, the usual impulse is to take the successful elements and try to sprinkle those around various other places.

➢ In design there are discourses around models used to generate social space, which are broadly grouped under the heading 'Spatial Agency'. These discourses are

almost always about trying to incorporate numerous elements – physical practice, social practice, geographical particularities. There are numerous layers.

➢ We saw these layers in this morning's presentation. There are these people, this music, this history, this legal case, these current political actions. We can see social space being generated from each of these elements.

➢ As much as these often nebulous individual elements can be extracted or seen to work elsewhere, we need to pay attention to the geographic specificities in this case.

Adewale:
The challenge I find in a place like Nigeria is that there is not that kind of openness to exploring complexity. For a place where complexity and adaptability is so endemic, we often have very pragmatic and practical 'A to B' conversations which actually push away exploring the things Caspaer is talking about and understanding the root causes. The kind of design thinking that is emerging from CMAP is actually very rare... I wonder how that includes the resilience of the people. One thing we know for a fact is that the people CMAP is working with exist in the face of incredible trauma and challenge... Is it the resilience of the people that has inspired this, or is it some construct that you [Michael] had before that you wanted to apply in that space?

Michael:
I didn't arrive in Port Harcourt with the intention of starting the project. There was no prior position. It was an accident. It literally grew out of an encounter between me and Fubara, Prince and various other people; friendships and relationships developed, and the project grew. We all drew on our own knowledge and experiences – Fubara with his really quite staggering historical and contemporary understanding of local and national politics – and it developed out of conversation. What was important was that at the heart of the project was something very concrete, at least in the beginning: keeping a roof over people's heads... That allowed us to mobilise a lot of people; back in 2009, we could get thousands of people out on the street very easily. The challenge is, when the bulldozers and bullets recede, how do we mobilise people with the same energy and urgency around digging a ditch or putting anti-rust coating on the 20,000 bolts that hold up the radio mast? That's the challenge.

Adewale:
➢ When there is no crisis, there is a danger that you become just another community where only the busybodies come for meetings.

Shane Solanki, Poet/Musician:
➢ When you lose impetus, what has been put in place can fall apart, if you haven't built up systems. A good way of building systems is mentorship. People need to have clear roles. A good idea is to network, to swap best practice.

Michael:
➢ We need to broaden our range of references, including our inspirational models.

WORKSHOP 3: ARTS, CREATIVITY AND ACTIVISM

What is the role of the arts and creativity in the community movements and activism of spatially and socially marginalised people?

Prof Alan Read, Department of English, King's College London (chair):
  ➢ Michael shared with us a series of extraordinary practices.
  ➢ He apologised for 'a total lack of bass in the room' (one of several technical hitches besetting the Anatomy Museum on the day) and, in consequence, for King's inability to represent Mr 2Kay's performance appropriately. This failure raises more profound questions about the adequacy of our representations more generally. If you cannot represent those who do not have a voice felicitously, truthfully, accurately, then you've got a problem with democracy…. Perhaps artistic practices are things which allow us to see failures of representation more clearly? One of the subtexts of the day was a question of the media's failure to represent politics.
  ➢ The other big question is how do the arts *do* politics – as opposed to merely *representing* politics? One of the most striking things about the documentary footage shown in the morning session is the aesthetic quality of the work, which contrasted with the ugliness of the reality it represents.

Michael:
  ➢ There is nothing accidental, or incidental, about shaping the story: it is an essential element in changing the way people live in the city. It was one of our fundamental assumptions that telling stories would help change the shape of the city. We wanted to change the way in which people imagined and inhabited the city, the way in which people planned and built the city.
  ➢ But not all stories can be represented. CMAP has had to make strategic decisions about what can and cannot be given visibility. Not everything can be given equal visibility and so representation has not been neutral or objective. We have deliberately not represented certain particularly difficult issues or tensions. There are some things we don't want to frame and foreground because we don't think it will help… In that sense, our representation has not been objective. We are engaged in an exercise, for the most part, of planned communication, with very clear strategic objectives. One of those strategic objectives is to open up a space for creativity, for unplanned communication… We haven't set out to represent felicitously what is already there. I think that is particularly apparent in the mapping project. We are not just trying to map what is out there. We are trying to create new spaces, new imaginary spaces that can be realised, new physical spaces in which people can imagine.

Prof Mark Turner, Department of English, King's College London:
  ➢ True representation can never be realised, because that is not the way that representation works. Just creating the space for that endless failure – 'failure' might

not be a strategically helpful word - is a worthwhile process; it is not about the achievement or delivery of representation.

Michael:
That is one of the really difficult things: to fail, but to fail usefully… It's particularly difficult for people who like to make things – a piece, a series of photographs, a film. Often those things may not be very good, but you have a thing, it's definite. This thing that we are trying to make is not a thing. It involves lots of things – physical and material things – but it is not a thing. That's very difficult to negotiate.

Alan:
- You have chosen to use film and sound, mediums which foreground technical expertise. You haven't shied away from mediatized forms. In your presentation we heard a recording of some scripted dialogue – a short play – which might be the most obvious way to allow a community practice to emerge. However, you have chosen to position technology and machinery centrally. There is the idea that the point of photography is not to take a photograph *of* the political event, but to provide the possibility *for* the political event: it allows the civic to occur around the camera lens. Did you choose to use these technical and mediatized artistic forms simply because you are interested in them, or was this more of a conscious decision?

Michael:
- People can do things and want to do things. We are working with lots of artistically and creatively accomplished people. They want to make things. These people have made their own city almost without support.
- An important part of this project is that technical accomplishments are realised. We want people to go on to make radio programmes, albums and exhibitions.

Hannah Cane:
- For creativity to be successful, does it have to be polished for global consumption? Ken Saro-Wiwa was able to master those technical mediums and mobilise a global audience. You could still argue, however, that this movement failed. Is creativity, at its essence, only meaningful and productive if it's globally transmittable? Or think of the Ken Saro-Wiwa bus… Does focussing on technical mediums risk losing some creativity that is rawer and, as a result, has more capacity-building potential at a local level?

Adewale:
- How do you mobilise a wider audience to understand what these people are doing in such a way that you open your door to let the information in? It has to be attractive, technically sound, and to generate the kinds of responses that you want. This morning we went on a tour of different sounds, visuals, etc. that helps us to empathise. When we see a young woman carrying a textbook out of what was her house, when we see Joy talking about something that nearly killed her, that is really powerful. I think that is very powerful and very necessary for engaging people in participation.

Michael:

- Development work is determined to 'make a difference', but so often disavows difference. It has difficulty addressing conflict and contradiction creatively. Take the notion of 'community': community hides a multitude of sins; is structured by difference, contradiction, competing interests, sometimes violent repressions. Yet so much development discourse treats this as an innocent term. No one working in an English department who makes a living reading and writing about texts would ever treat the notion so simplistically. And so perhaps the making at the heart of the project – the making of little films; these songs; maps and architectural designs, even – allows us to work with difference, allows the making of connections and conversations that are predicated on difference. Perhaps that allows us to move on with enthusiasm, and as Adewale says, to mobilise a wider audience, even as we lose our innocence.

Alan:
- The Ken Saro-Wiwa bus is 'useless' but it creates a space where creativity can happen.
- The film where Joy recounts her experience of being shot is utterly compelling. It inverts the discourse of complaint and turns it into a celebration – including a celebration of the soldier's ability to shoot her effectively. To do his job.
- That raises the question of arts-activism and litigation. Am I right that this group received compensation?

Michael:
- They did get compensation – inadequate compensation.
- The litigation programme has been successful by an objective measure. It was not necessarily the programme that we set out to run. But we wanted it to be an exercise in bringing together the plaintiffs, but not as victims; rather, we wanted them to act as advocates for the community around them, to discover how they could more effectively use these international human rights instruments.

Alan:
- Is there a link between the creative process and the legal process – between, as it were, musical instruments and legal instruments?

Precious:
Music and law are inseparable; both talk about rights. Music is beautiful. Sometimes music is like a weapon. When you can't really express yourself, you can sing and tell people what you feel about subjects and issues in society, about yourself and where you are coming from... I started my legal programme when this project started. I am coming from the community. I understand the difficulties we go through. Through this programme, I was able to realise that there are some certain rights that we don't have. There are some certain benefits that, as individuals, because of levels of engagement with these issues, we don't have... Every day at law school, I try to look at what is happening in the project, in my community, and what I am studying in school. There is a relationship between music and law. We cannot take music away from law. Most of the things that I learn in school I can translate into music and have a larger audience... In classes Bob Marley comes up. Bob Marley talks about 'your rights'. The law talks about 'your rights' and how things should be.

Michael:
- ➢ One of the striking things about the practice of law in Nigeria, with its European wigs and gowns, is that it is such a shabby drama.
- ➢ You see law as performance. It makes you realise that we can mobilise more powerful performances. We can mobilise powerful forces: powerful musical forces, powerful legal arguments. It increases the range of resources that communities have to create leverage and affect change in a very concrete way.

Shane:
- ➢ Arts and culture begin to influence the legal process.

Adewale:
- ➢ What Joy did was to tell us that she was victimised, but that she is not a victim. She chose someone who she thought was powerless to show that. She felt that the soldier was just doing his job.

Nse Esema:
- ➢ In the demolition-day video, there were women dancing and singing and creating art through song. They were using that to face the incoming threat of the bulldozers. I feel that that is very powerful and will be useful in sustaining this work.

Vanessa Mulangala, Radio/TV Producer, Presenter, Journalist:
- ➢ Returning to the video of Joy, I felt like it was a performance. It's almost as if she was acting in a role. I saw it as an art piece because I don't feel that this is someone who gave up... Yes, she says she is no longer a victim and forgives whoever shot her, but at the same time her life has been really impacted. For me it was a full-on performance... Art is a way to survive. The women that Nse mentioned who were dancing weren't dancing with joy... I believe that art and performance is a way to cope with these types of trauma.

Alan:
- ➢ Like any aesthetic object we watch with the possibility that this is a complete fiction. That has to be our freedom; otherwise there is no art. There is no art unless we can watch Joy and genuinely think 'this never happened to her'. That is where the power of that image comes from.

Adewale:
- ➢ It is possible that she was performing to overcome the trauma... or to become a star or whatever... It is also possible that in that moment, in giving a performance, she is also expressing her authentic self... My own people go to war dancing; there are many frightened youngsters amongst those people dancing. It is also a performance. There is something very natural about the human condition that is contradictory and constantly fighting for space.

Michael:
- ➢ Remember Berthold Brecht's answer to his own question:
              In the dark times

> Will there also be singing?
> Yes, there will also be singing.
> About the dark times.

Pat:
> ➤ I understand from today that this project isn't principally about documentary or recording something. The creativity is the space opened up by recording real events. The creativity is vested in the real. A war dance or the dance in front of the bulldozers is a very real intervention. It is not a performance on a stage. It's about the agency of art. In the English department, we have a sense that creativity escapes out of our classrooms and goes into the world and does something, but we don't know what exactly it does or how it does it. Today we understand something about how that translation happens.

Michael:
> ➤ With all of the challenges that people face, why would they bother coming into the studio to make music? Because they want to make music.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: REFLECTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT.

Immediate Effects

The event had immediate and measurable impact:
> ➤ It gave an enormous confidence boost to the community in Port Harcourt. For them, it was 'a thing of joy' to see their community and their practices accorded serious, day-long consideration by major institution in the heart of London – and, through that process, to get a perspective on the substantial contribution which they themselves were making to the evolving debate.
> ➤ For Michael Uwemedimo, the event gave an opportunity to marshal a huge range of material and shape it into a new product (a two-hour presentation that spliced together video footage, documentary photographs, music, radio inserts, and using it to create a sustained overview of all aspect of the programme's philosophy, procedures, domains of activity and achievements). In turn, the analysis and feedback that emerged from the afternoon's workshops allowed CMAP to articulate and reflect on its practices in a demonstrably enabling way.
> ➤ An Amnesty International delegation – many of whom have been directly involved in the project – were impressed to see the years of work presented in a way that revlealed it as both coherent and compelling. As a result, their Director of Fundraising, Julie Verhaar, committed the organisation to fund-raise for the Radio Building.

- A journalist and media trainer form BBC Media Action is going to visit the project in Port Harcourt on the strength of what he learnt at the event, and help support the development of the new radio station's editorial identity.
- Nse Umoh Esema, Program Director, Community Innovators Lab, MIT, who participated at the event through Skype, posted an article about CMAP and the workshop a fortnight later. In it, she celebrates the project's use of storytelling to imagine new alternatives and to use it as a catalyst for change.[14] In consequence, MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning is going to facilitate student internships to support the community planning phase of the project.

The Big Questions Arising

1. The Question of Gentrification in the Global South.

The first workshop raised fascinating questions about how far our understanding of gentrification, as it plays out in the cities of Europe and North America, provides a model for understanding its workings in the Global South. There seems to be a need – and an opportunity – to conduct fundamental research into this area at PhD level.

2. The Question of the Replicable Model.

In the second workshop, 'Reshaping the City through Participatory Practice', Michael seemed to be resistant to the idea that there was a CMAP model or that its *modus operandi* could be replicated. It was, he felt, more a happening that grew out of a particular conjunction of people in a very specific situation rather than a formula that could be extrapolated and copied. This, it strikes me, is the crucial challenge for *our* project: are we indeed examining (and admiringly describing) a one-off or are we identifying replicable elements that could be adopted (and adapted) by other activists in other marginalised communities? Is it, as Nse Umoh Esema argues, 'helping to imagine and prototype through stories and physical interventions, different development models for the city'?

While, clearly, the specifics of friendship, charisma and leadership cannot be reproduced at will, there does seem to be both an ethos and a model of content-production that are separable from the particular chemistry that brought them into being in the first place. One of the hallmarks of CMAP is the way it builds democratic participation into all its undertakings. The processes by which CMAP embeds and promotes those values are, surely, identifiable. How are they enunciated? Are they written into CMAP's constitution? How are they built into its work practices? Are there processes for reflecting and feeding back on how those values are implemented and upheld? And, of course, CMAP's signature is the way it enlists the arts to create imaginative spaces that can become physical spaces in a more equable and sustainable model of urbanisation. So, the central challenge for Reimagining the City is to explore whether CMAP's deployment of the arts as a form of housing and human-rights activism *and* the processes it has developed to do so can be codified. Can we identify any patterns and procedures

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[14] See http://colabradio.mit.edu/can-storytelling-drive-inclusive-development/

that might be replicated elsewhere? Two riders qualify any such attempt: any model which we extrapolate must be recognisable to CMAP; and it must valorise CMAP's informality rather than seek to formalise it.

3. CMAP & King's: Reciprocity and Creativity.

Reimagining the City is itself a creative process. Rather than following a template, it seeks to discover a model for conducting exchanges between a university and a certain kind of NGO. There is a creativity in the collaboration and not just in whatever form its final output takes.

The plasticity and unpredictability of the exchange was exemplified by the way the dialogue itself evolved across the day. Its dynamic demonstrated that this was anything but a one-sided 'knowledge exchange', with experts from King's reviewing CMAP's practices from a position of specialist insight, in order to feedback recommendations accordingly. In fact, knowledge flowed in precisely the opposite direction, not from King's to Port Harcourt but from Port Harcourt to King's. Indeed, as the afternoon progressed and the 'experts' in London plied Michael and the contributors from Port Harcourt with questions, the relationship began to seem extractive rather than reciprocal. So, the direction (and nature) of learning and what exactly reciprocity means in such a context is one of the things we need to explore.

4. CMAP & King's: The University and the World.

One of the things we are exploring, therefore, is the nature and value of an exchange such as this for both King's and for CMAP.

For the King's participating in the project, the benefits are very obvious:
➢ For the English faculty, CMAP provides a real-world environment where assumptions about the relationship between the arts and activism can be tested. And it demonstrates the impact of the arts and humanities by giving substance to our belief that storytelling allows the emergence of empowering new narratives, and that the power of the imagination lies precisely in its power to imagine – and therefore make possible – different realities.
➢ The partnership opens up rich possibilities for pedagogical collaboration. It has resulted in an experimental and extremely popular module, 'Language on the Edge', that uses the link between King's and CMAP to challenge the boundaries between literature and politics; the potential for a similar collaboration at MA level is obvious.
➢ For geographers, CMAP provides an invaluable case study for those interested in issues of gentrification, African urbanisation, informal settlements, urban resilience, narrative geography, participatory mapping...

These existing partnerships, however, only scratch the surface. The partnership could be extended to offer transformative collaboration between the university more widely and CMAP.
➢ **World Questions/King's Answers**: The questions that CMAP is asking and the answers it is providing touch on the great world questions of our time: development

and informal urbanisation in the Global South, environmental degradation and climate change, reliance versus radicalisation. Moreover, its singularity offers not just creative solutions to 'world questions' but that it offers creativity as a solution. That gives the arts and humanities an invaluable point of entry to engaging with, and supplying, 'King's answers'.

➢ **Bush House**: In line with Bush House's iconic status as the former home of the BBC World Service, it is expected that the current refurbishment of the building will include a radio space. In this context, a collaboration with Chicoco Radio offers immediate and obvious opportunities. It offers King's a chance to enter into dialogue with the voices shaping the world's future – and to provide a platform for those voices to be heard. Accordingly, we have made a proposal to Max Saunders' AHRI / Performance Foundation initiative, the 'World Service At Bush House'. (See appendix)

➢ **Student Involvement**: 'Language on the Edge' has already demonstrated the appetite which students have to become involved in this project. The scope for far wider collaboration is immense. It might include online collaborative projects such as developing radio content, facilitating scripting workshops, researching, curating the video archive, web campaigning, developing communication strategies for presenting narrative geographies... Such collaborations would be well placed to attract Higher Education Innovation Funding. It is also an initiative likely to attract Alumni interest.

➢ **Arts and Law:** CMAP has plotted an interesting trajectory from arts activism to legal litigation that have interesting implications legal performance.

➢ **Decarbonising & Ethical Investment:** CMAP's activities are, ultimately, indissociable from issues arising from the oil industry and its environmental and social impact in the Delta. It provides a valuable partner, therefore, as King's thinks about climate change, decarbonising the atmosphere (and its own investment portfolio).[15] In that context, too, there are interesting synergies with Alan Read's Estuary project.

➢ **Cultural Institute:** The developing involvement of the Google Cultural Institute with CMAP is richly suggestive...

➢ **Institute of Psychiatry:** Many of CMAP's short documentaries are, essentially, documents of trauma (cf Joy Williams, Linus John). The use of documentary to bear witness to and allow the expression of trauma – and its potential to mitigate PTSD – offers suggestive possibilities for research.

The Return Leg

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[15] See https://www.kcl.ac.uk/governancezone/Assets/Finance/Socially%20Responsible%20Investment.pdf

- ➢ We are proposing the making of city-soundscapes with Chicoco Radio while in the Delta, for Max Saunders' AHRI / Performance Foundation initiative, 'The World Service at Bush House'. (See appendix)

- ➢ It would be good if the second workshop coincided with the presence of Google Street View in Port Harcourt. CMAP hope to stage performances and spatial stories, including radio programmes, to coincide with Google's visit.

- ➢ Writing workshops, including workshops on scripting copies for the website, radio dramas, citizen journalism, advocacy, stories as well as policy writing, would be very helpful.