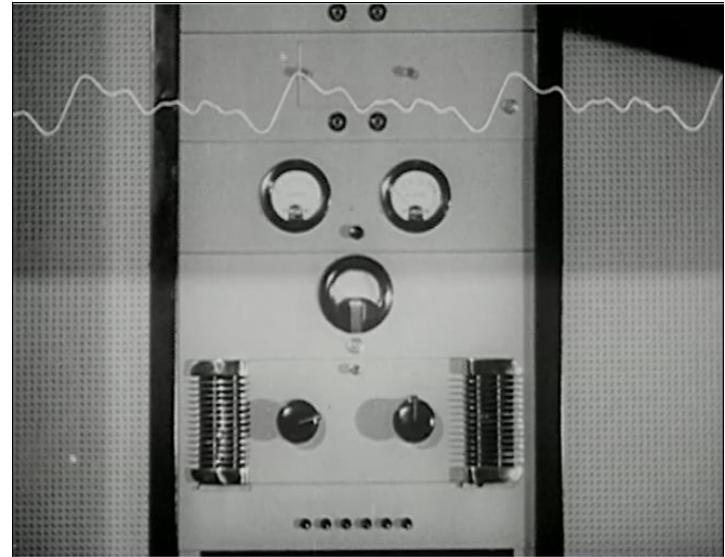


# Heritage Case Studies 2019



## AHRC-Funded Heritage

Profiling current and recently completed AHRC research projects to show the breadth and range of research being funded as well as innovative and creative approaches to heritage

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# Digital Innovations in Urban Heritage



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

Deborah Sutton (PI)

Hilal Ahmed (Co-I)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Lancaster University

Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi

Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage, Delhi Chapter.

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC GCRF

## DATES OF FUNDING

December 2017 – July 2019

The Research Network has brought scholars together from across South Asia to think about the application of digital methods (in archiving, research, dissemination and documentation) to urban heritage in India. The first workshop was held in April 2018 at the offices of the Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage, the second will be held on 15 and 16 April 2019.

The principal outcome of the project is Partition City Delhi, a cultural heritage app that we will launch in April 2019. Partition City Delhi will be India's first cultural heritage app and will be available in English and Hindi versions.



The aim of the network is to use digital technology to create new narratives of place and past within urban environments. Partition is a splintered past that resonates in the present; a proliferation of loss, departures, journeys and uncertain futures. It is also a history that transformed the vast, complex, infuriating and wonderful city of Delhi, culturally, demography and physically. The app is an opportunity to create a tangible connection to Partition heritage across the urban landscape.

The app contains multi-media histories about the transformation of the city after 1947 and the experiences of refugees who moved into, out of and around the city. The media contained in the PartitionCityDelhi app dates from 1947 until 1959 and comes from archives (including the [Delhi State Archives](#) and [Nehru Memorial Library](#)), from newspapers and from oral narratives held by the [Centre for Community Knowledge](#) in Delhi. The app will not guide users around the city; rather those already on the move will use it during journeys in which mobile use is habitual. As the app-user travels, they will receive alerts from their phone that tells them that a site associated with a partition story is near.

Work has just begun on a second Partition City app in Karachi, Pakistan. This app will mirror the Delhi app in the first capital of Pakistan. In total there are four South Asian cultural heritage apps in the pipeline, all derived from this network.

You can also find some discussion and updates on our work via Twitter hashtags #PartitionCityDelhi or #PartitionCityKarachi.

# Transmitting, safeguarding and promoting Chagossian cultural heritage in the context of protracted displacement



Jean Louis Hervé teaches children how to weave a basket from coconut fronds at a heritage workshop in Mauritius (Image by Laura Jeffery)

## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

Laura Jeffery (PI)

Rebecca Rotter (Co-I)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

University of Edinburgh;

Chagos Refugees Group, Mauritius and UK;

Vinesh Hookoomsing, Linguist, Mauritius;

Gopalen Chellapermal, Film Director, Wild Square Production, Mauritius;

Satyen Bhujun, Film Director, AVARTS, Mauritius;

Hans Ramduth, Exhibition Designer, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius;

Saradha Soobrayen, Poet, UK;

Carolyn Murphy, Arts and Heritage Project Manager, UK;

Crawley Museum, UK;

Chagos Solidarity Trust Fund, Mauritius.

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC/ ESRC

## DATES OF FUNDING

April 2017 – March 2019

The CHAGOS: Cultural Heritage Across Generations project supported the transmission, safeguarding and promotion of Chagossian intangible cultural heritage through collaboration between the displaced Chagossian community, academics, artists, and cultural heritage practitioners. The community's origins lie in the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean, where enslaved and later indentured labourers with diverse ancestry were brought to work on copra plantations in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently developed their own ways of life over several generations. Between 1968 and 1973 the UK government forcibly displaced the entire population from the Archipelago to Mauritius and Seychelles in order to make way for a US military base on the largest island, Diego Garcia. Since gaining British citizenship in 2002, a large number have migrated to the UK. Despite a protracted legal struggle, the community continues to be barred from returning to Chagos. Only one-third of the approximately 1,500 displaced islanders remain alive today.



Jean Louis Hervé teaches Emelyn Sowamber how to weave a basket from coconut fronds at a heritage workshop in Mauritius (Image by Laura Jeffery)

Ethnographic research conducted by the PI with the Chagossian community (from 2001-2016, funded by ESRC and Leverhulme) analysed the significance of cultural forms – particularly coconut-based cuisine, Kreol language, and *sega*, a syncretic Indian Ocean genre of music, song and dance – for the community's struggle for the right of return. Chagossians must demonstrate cultural continuity and cultural loss simultaneously: to show that they remain a distinctive group, they must emphasise the endurance

and distinctiveness of their culture vis-à-vis their Mauritian or Seychellois counterparts; yet to show that they are victims worthy of recompense, they must demonstrate the cultural losses and fragmentation they have suffered. The research identified the challenges faced by the community in sustaining and transmitting their traditions as a result of protracted dislocation, geographical dispersal, chronic social, political, and economic marginalisation, and a rapidly declining population of elders.

This research led to the development of CHAGOS: Cultural Heritage Across Generations, supported by an AHRC Follow-On Fund for Impact and Engagement and an ESRC Impact Accelerator Award. The project has had significant outcomes at the levels of community, policy and society.

#### Community level: Transmitting knowledge and skills across generations

In 2017, the CHAGOS project delivered heritage transmission workshops in Mauritius and the UK on the themes of *sega* music, coconut preparation, cuisine, coconut handicrafts, and medicinal plants. Chagos islanders led demonstrations and younger generations developed new skills and a deeper knowledge of Chagossian history, cultural traditions, and collective identification. In Mauritius, the workshops provided the impetus for the Chagos Tambour Group to record a [new album](#) using traditional instruments and methods. In the UK, the workshops inspired cultural revivals: community leaders secured charitable funding to run further heritage workshops, and musicians and dancers formed a new intergenerational *sega* group, Chagos Tambour Junior UK, which has performed at local events. Community efforts to preserve and transmit their heritage are enhanced by a dual-language digital archive, <https://chagos.online/>, featuring instructive films, photographs, recipe cards, and contextual information produced through the project.

#### Policy level: Safeguarding Chagossian *sega*



Jean Louis Hervé makes a whistle from coconut fronds at a heritage workshop in Mauritius (Image by Laura Jeffery)

The CHAGOS project team contributed to the Mauritian government's nomination of Chagossian *sega* to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and installed an exhibition about Chagossian *sega* music at the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Mauritius in 2018. The nomination file will be considered in 2019 for possible inscription in 2020. It is hoped that the inscription of Chagossian *sega* would elicit financial and

infrastructural support for the community to continue practicing *sega*, alongside greater international exposure of its plight, which could boost the struggle for compensation and resettlement.

## Society level: Promoting Chagossian heritage



Chagossian women and children learn how to make mouf (coconut banana cake) at a heritage workshop in Mauritius (Image by Laura Jeffery)

The CHAGOS project promoted Chagossian heritage to politicians, policy makers and members of the public via an international touring exhibition of images, films, objects and texts generated through the heritage workshops. In Mauritius, the exhibition attracted extensive media coverage, reaching hundreds of thousands of people, and extremely high-profile guests of honour including the acting President of the Republic of Mauritius (Paramasivum Pillay Vyapoory), a former President of the Republic of Mauritius (Cassam Uteem), and a Mauritian Government Minister (Nando Bodha). In the UK, the exhibition received

nearly 500 visitors and guests of honour including the Mayor of Crawley (Brian Quinn) and the Crawley MP (Henry Smith). In La Réunion, the exhibition was sponsored by Air Mauritius, which pledged to feature Chagossian music and cuisine on Air Mauritius flights from 2019. The exhibition thus informed large numbers of the public and high level decision makers about Chagossian intangible cultural heritage.

## Project outputs



Bernard Nourrice teaches Sloanne Lafoudre how to crack open a coconut in order to prepare coconut milk at a heritage workshop in the UK (Image by Pascaline Cotte)

The project's open access digital archive <https://chagos.online/> runs on the Omeka platform. The PI and Co-I published an open access [article](#) in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* on efforts to safeguard Chagossian sega via the project's cultural heritage workshops and the UNESCO inscription process. It explores the potential political, social and financial benefits of safeguarding, such as increased legitimacy, strengthened collective identification, and funding for cultural activities, and also the potential risks, such as loss of control over

community knowledge and products. It demonstrates that, contrary to some of the critiques of the UNESCO inscription process in particular, efforts to transmit and inscribe do not necessarily 'freeze cultural change', not least because there are limits to the extent to which people use a list, an inventory, or a recording as a guide to 'living' cultural practice.

As part of her ‘non-residency’ on the CHAGOS project, British-born Mauritian poet Saradha Soobrayen conducted poetic inquiry at the heritage workshops, inspiring a series of observational poems and reflections that will be published in a special issue of [Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture](#) on arts-based engagement with migration (co-edited by Laura Jeffery, Mariangela Palladino, Rebecca Rotter and Agnes Woolley) in 2019.

#### PROJECT LINKS

CHAGOS online: <http://chagos.online>

CHAGOS: Cultural Heritage Across Generations Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/chagos/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/drlaurajeffery?lang=en>

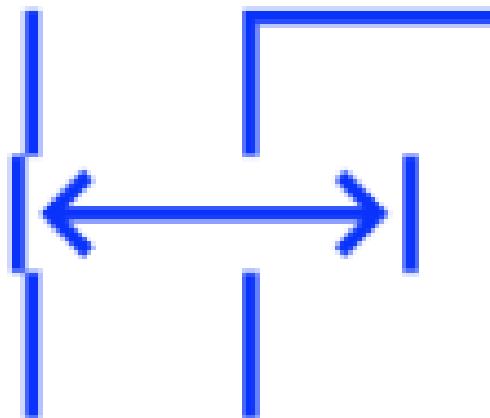
#### PUBLICATIONS

For other relevant publications, see the PI’s and Co-I’s profile pages:

Laura Jeffery: [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/staff/social\\_anthropology/jeffery\\_laura](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/staff/social_anthropology/jeffery_laura)

Rebecca Rotter: [https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/rebecca-rotter\(4725458d-6b9d-464c-899a-730f473fca98\).html](https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/rebecca-rotter(4725458d-6b9d-464c-899a-730f473fca98).html)

# Heritage Futures



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

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Sharon Macdonald (Co-I)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

University College London  
Linnaeus University  
University of Exeter  
University of York

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC

## DATES OF FUNDING

April 2015 – September 2019

Heritage Futures is a 4-year research programme investigating how the future is assembled, curated, cared for, and designed through conservation practices. Heritage Futures has carried out ambitious interdisciplinary research to explore the potential for innovative and creative exchanges across a broad range of heritage and heritage-related fields in conversation with a number of partner organisations and interest groups. The programme's four themes of Uncertainty, Diversity, Transformation, and Profusion identify challenges for the future of heritage and look at a range of institutions that tackle them in various ways.



Participants on the ferry to Orford Ness on the Tranformation knowledge exchange.

Heritage Future's knowledge exchanges were a key part of project's methodology. Within the Heritage Futures research programme, the term 'knowledge exchange workshop' referred to creative, site-based events that brought together academics and practitioners to jointly explore important cross-sectoral issues with the aim of reshaping future conservation policies and practices. Unlike conferences, knowledge exchanges had few speaker sessions. Instead,

knowledge exchanges were primarily interactive: arranged around exploring and discussing a particular aspect of decision-making, ethics, or conservation frameworks at a specific location through site visits, play, and ethnographic engagements with the host site or organisation. By looking closely at what one of our partner organisations "does", it helped us as a group reflect more generally on the range of approaches taken by the organisations with which we worked.

Knowledge exchange events were one way Heritage Futures researchers enquired into the norms of conservation practice. They also helped to shape project outcomes. Participants told us that they appreciated them because they provided a space to take a step back from everyday practice and allowed participants to consider their work in a new light. Dr Ingrid Samuel, a Heritage Futures Advisory Board member and National Trust Historic Environment Director, [said of her participation in the knowledge exchanges:](#)

[T]his has been the longest and best period of continual professional development that I've ever had. It has genuinely been an incredible experience. I have taken papers to my Board of Trustees and said things to them that I may not have said without you getting in my head and making me think. [...] I've had the opportunity to explore relevant issues quite deeply with you first. So it's been an amazing period of CDP for me. It's also been the most fun kind of professional development I've ever done.'

This case study reviews some of the key questions and activities which emerged from Heritage Futures knowledge exchanges. In addition to a number of theme-specific knowledge exchange events, we ran three cross-programme knowledge exchanges.

#### Knowledge Exchange 1: Uncertainty

**Site of focus:** Forsmark, the site of the construction of a new long term Swedish nuclear waste repository

**Site Partner:** SKB, the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company

**Big question:** What would you conserve for 100,000 years?

The first project-wide knowledge exchange took most participants far out of their conservation comfort zones to reflect on what the truly long-term legacies of nuclear waste might look like. Although not often thought of as a site of heritage, nuclear waste *is* a material inheritance for future generations, perhaps more powerful and long-lasting than many actively conserved monuments. As a way of trying to envision we really mean when we talk about long term preservation, each participant was asked to bring an object they would like to see conserved into the deep future. Trying to think through the future of a specific object forced people to grapple with the uncertainty of the long-term: can we expect people to understand, use, or value our objects in the same way that we have?

More at: <https://heritage-futures.org/from-the-archive-to-the-vault/>

#### Knowledge Exchange 2: Diversity

**Site of focus:** The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

**Site Partner:** Kew

**Big question:** What does diversity mean through the lens of "the future"?

What does diversity have to do with the future? At Kew participants learned about how recent changes in the phylogeny of plants (how they are organised according to their evolutionary relationships) from the introduction of DNA technology have upset established ideas about plant diversity and taxonomy. With exercises and discussion, participants explored how different frameworks of conservation create the categories through which we can understand diversity and its value. Different ways of framing diversity create very different templates for organising and managing heritage, and shape the composition of our future realities.

More at: <https://heritage-futures.org/techniques-worlding-knowledge-exchange-kew/>

### Knowledge Exchange 3: Transformation

**Site of focus:** Orford Ness, a nature reserve and military history site in Suffolk

**Site Partner:** National Trust, CITiZAN (Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network)

**Big question:** How can those responsible for caring for landscapes and historic features respond to change and loss positively and proactively?

The third knowledge exchange aimed to explore heritage management practices and philosophies that seek to accommodate loss and change. Orford Ness' is a place characterised by ongoing change in both its natural and historic built environment. A spit off the Suffolk coast, the Ness been shaped by both coastal erosion and the National Trust's policy of 'continued ruination', letting elements of the sites' 20<sup>th</sup> century built environment to decay. The aesthetics and experience of transformation of the Ness have made it unique and valued by visitors but also raise challenging questions about how to manage the loss of integrity of sites and how to help stakeholders manage their relationships to changing places.

More at: <https://heritage-futures.org/transforming-loss-knowledge-exchange-orford/>

Within each of the research programmes four themes, additional knowledge exchanges produced sector reports exploring futures for data and collections, contemporary collecting, museum profusion, as well as reflections on creativity in landscape stewardship.

# Song Lines to Impact and Legacy: Creating Living Knowledge through working with Social Haunting



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

Dr Geoff Bright (PI)  
Dr Sarah McNicol (Co-I)  
Andrew McMillan (Co-I)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Manchester Metropolitan University;  
Co-operative College, Manchester;  
Unite Community;  
AMARC;  
New Vic Theatre, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire  
Burslem Jubilee Project, Stoke in Trent  
East Durham Arts Network, Seaham  
Sheffield Live!  
WEA North West Region  
Young Minds Rochdale

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC

## DATES OF FUNDING

February 2017 – January 2018

The AHRC connected Communities funded project *Song Lines to Impact and Legacy: Creating Living Knowledge through working with Social Haunting* (*Song Lines*) was the third of a series of similarly funded and closely related projects. Each focused in a different way on affective legacies of extended periods of deindustrialisation. The first project, [Working with Social Haunting](#), worked on the South Yorkshire coalfield and in the former textile producing area around Rochdale during 2015. The second, [Opening the Unclosed Space](#), was based



A pop-up re-staging at the 2017 Durham Miners' Gala of the 1993 Women's Occupation of Trentham pit in 1993 enacted by project partners Boredelines at New Vic Theatre, Newcastle under Lyme

mainly on the North Staffordshire coalfield during 2016. *Song Lines*, extended the base of study on to the Durham coalfield in the North East of England while also carrying out additional research in some of the same areas.

Working with two main partners: the [Manchester-based Co-operative College](#) and [Unite Community](#) (the community-facing structure of Unite the Union), all three of our projects aimed to investigate how troubling affective meanings are often carried into the present from contested pasts – and the ongoing

legacy of conflict in the UK coalfields, particularly related to the 1984-85 miners' strike and deindustrialisation of the coalfields, constituted our main case study. While drawing generally on scholarship around spatialities of feeling, memory and identity from within Cultural Studies and Social Theory, our central intention has been was to operationalise the conceptual framework of a “social haunting” first elaborated by Avery Gordon in her remarkable *Ghostly Matters, Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (see Gordon, 1997).

A social haunting, Gordon tells us, is made evident in social settings when “disturbed feelings cannot be put away”. It is an entangling reminder of lingering trouble relating to “social violence done in the past” and a notification “that what’s been concealed is very much alive and present [and] showing up without any sign of leaving”. Social ghosts, while strongly felt are, however, not easily known and working in the ‘blind field’ that they occupy requires a new method of knowledge production that, according to Gordon can “represent the damage and the haunting of the historical alternatives”. In response to this methodological challenge we developed a series of co-produced, participatory community arts workshops that we’ve called ‘Ghost Labs’. These semi-improvised, non-hierarchical, community/activist/arts ‘event spaces’ used arts-based approaches

to open up the question of how difficult affective meanings carried into the present from contested pasts might, rather than narrowing the scope of imaginable futures, actually be harnessed as energies for benevolent change. Song Lines, a year-long project of two phases delivered over 2017, concentrated on using mainly just one of our arts techniques – the ‘Community Tarot’ reading – to generate a process of song production and, ultimately, international dissemination via the channel of community radio. In the first phase, the Community Tarot – a playful reading from a ‘Tarot’ pack showing words and images gathered during our community co-production process – was rolled out through Ghost Labs that engaged a number of new communities. The Ghost Labs involved individual ‘readings’ which were then collected together and scaled up as community readings, assembling a kind of living cultural lexicon of community imagination, as themes emerged for sustained reflection, creative work, and action.



Examples of cards showing images and words gathered during in the community co-production process

In the second phase, the creative materials generated through those community Tarot readings were used to stimulate the creation of a set of contemporary ballads specially written in the tradition of dissenting song by our project partners, folk musicians Ribbon Road. These ballads were then used to initiate “song lines”, circuits of ‘living knowledge’, that were fed outwards through a series of community engagement events, an archive of films, pop-up theatre and a radio documentary disseminated through international community radio. The

documentary featured excerpts from Ghost Labs and Ribbon Road’s songs, an explanation of the concept of ‘social haunting’ and of the Ghost Labs, a socio-economic and political background to the communities involved in the UK project, and an interactive platform through which listeners’ in varying local contexts might reflect on the resonance of the idea of ‘social haunting’ in their own settings. In the event, the documentary broadcast by radio stations in the UK and the following stations internationally: Bembeke Radio, Dedza, Malawi; Civil Radio, Budapest, Hungary; Gombrek FM in Sidokerto-Jombang, East Java, Indonesia; Radio Dzimwe, Monkey Bay, Malawi; Radio Student, Ljubljana, Slovenia; and WMMT FM, Whitesburg, Kentucky, USA. Audiences participated in listener groups in these diverse settings and provided their own material to feedback into the project. A cautious estimate of listeners of the overall number of listeners reached was around 200,000 in total.

Link for full information: <https://www.socialhaunting.com/>

Community Investigators: Dr Amanda Benson, Co-Operative College. Mark James, Unite Community South Yorkshire Branch

Creative Practitioners – Jim Medway (comic artist), Max Munday (community broadcaster), New Vic Borderlines (theatre), Steve Pool (film maker), Ribbon Road (musicians) with Carl Joyce (photographer).

# Madagascar in the World: Songs for Madagascar



Photo of the group Madagascar All Stars.  
<http://songsformadagascar.com/musiciens>

## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

Ulrike Meinhof (PI)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

University of Southampton

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC FoF

## DATES OF FUNDING

December 2015 – September 2017

Hi. I am Ulrike Hanna Meinhof, now a professor emeritus from the University of Southampton (Figure 1). Since 2002 I have been following the paths and interconnections of musicians of Malagasy origin in and across many sites in Madagascar and from there to Europe and Africa. I'd like to take you on a journey supported by the AHRC, that moved me from an academic research project *TNMundi* to a follow-on project reaching out to the general public with a full length music documentary. That film – *Songs for Madagascar* – produced in collaboration with award-winning director Cesar Paes from Laterit film productions shows the social commitment and movements of a group of musicians evolving from the project, *The Madagascar All Stars*.

The *TNMundi* project

In collaboration with co-researcher Dr Nadia Kiwan and a research fellow Dr Marie-Pierre Gibert whose work concentrated on North African artists, our research offers alternative perspectives to migration and globalisation research. My own work focused on the mobilities of individual artists from Madagascar, connecting people and places in Madagascar with those in Europe, Africa and worldwide. It shows how migrants are often mis-represented in public and private discourses by ignoring their ‘transcultural capital’ and the benefit they offer to sending *and* receiving countries. Our analysis of the movement of artists identified particular socio-geographic spaces, individual people, and institutions as human, spatial and institutional ‘hubs’ that underpinned successful networking for many of the artists. But already with TNMundi we did not want to remain solely in the academic realm. Hence we integrated research symposia with cultural events for the general public. Curated by the Malagasy consultant to TNMundi, the musician Dama Mahaleo, we were able to attract a large general public, NGOs and the media in Antananarivo in 2007, in Rabat in 2008 and in Southampton in 2009. In this way our research reached out to the public whilst also supporting the emergence of a new group of engaged musicians around Dama Mahaleo, the Madagascar All Stars.

#### *Madagascar in the World: The Impact of Music on Global Concerns*

##### AHRC Follow-on Project 2015-17

Here the aim was specifically to translate the research results from the TNMundi project for a general audience through a full feature length documentary film Songs for Madagascar with bonus material. The film was realised as the interdisciplinary collaboration between myself as researcher, the film maker and producer Cesar and Marie-Clemence Paes from [Laterit film productions](#), the project consultant and musician Dama Mahaleo, the musicians from the Madagascar All Stars and various NGOs and other contributors. With my full agreement there was to be no top-down voice-over explaining the theoretical and empirical outcome of the underlying research but instead the film should illustrate the activism and movements of the musicians through their music, their song lyrics and the concert-debates they engaged in. Rather than using explicit didactic commentary these different ‘bottom-up’ modes were to encapsulate key issues of environmental protection and the role of engaged diasporas in sending and receiving countries. This implicit approach raises the question as to the extent to which such themes are realised by the audiences. To find this out I followed up selected screenings in the first year of the film’s release by questionnaires in 4 different languages as well as question and answer sequences, and debates. Some of the results of this enquiry will be addressed at the end of this exposé.

#### *The Madagascar All Stars*

To appreciate the formation of this group of 6 musicians, each with their own solo careers, we need to be aware of the diversity of their background and the highly charged symbolic nature of their demonstration of ‘unity in diversity’. Madagascar has for many decades suffered tensions between the coastal regions and the highlands and there are large cultural differences between these and the North and the South. There are also different career paths for those musicians who left Madagascar to make their life in Europe and those who remained in Madagascar but only occasionally tour in Europe. Hence uniting in one group musicians who originate from the different regions in Madagascar *and* who live today in different parts of the world is meant to show national and transnational cultural diversity in a very different and positive light. With an origin from the Highlands of Madagascar we see on the picture Dama Mahaleo (4th from left) who lives in Antananarivo and Morondava, Erick Manana (1st from left) who lives in Berlin and Bordeaux, and Justin Vali (3rd from left) who lives in Lille. Originating from the South of Madagascar there is Regis Gizavo (2nd from left) who lived in Paris until his untimely death in 2017, Ricky Olombelo (1st from right) who lives in Antananarivo but with strong roots in the deep south), and with an origin from the north of Madagascar there is Jaojoby (2nd from right) who lives in Antananarivo and joined the group in 2015/2016 after the original group member Marius Fenoamby who lives in Paris left the group. The diverse composition of the group was an explicit aim of the musicians themselves – a making visible to Malagasy that there can be ‘unity in diversity’, and also a symbolic representation of the cultural benefits of diversity to everyone.

#### *Producing the film Songs for Madagascar*

The key question for director and researcher in creating the film was how to translate academic analysis and data into a documentary film without a ‘top-down’ explanatory commentary. Certain pre-conditions need to be met right from the start, namely there has to be a high level of trust and friendship between director, researcher and the musicians since unless there is a willingness to adapt to very different perspectives and aims, accept compromise and resolve tensions such a project is bound to fail. So when I chose to collaborate with the film director Cesar Paes I knew from his previous films that he brought a very different tool-kit to my own analytical perspective.

Since there was to be no analytical commentary how could the film tell its own story bottom-up? If we follow the camera we can see all the following techniques in practice: first of all by giving a voice to the artists and local people, showing them in conversation or at press conferences, during debates; observing rehearsals where they were learning each others’ songs, and during concerts; letting them tell their life stories and concerns in interview mode or through the lyrics of their songs, that were sub-titled in several languages. But meaning is also made through diverse editorial techniques such as image, text and music interrelations and cuts that could

link scenes in Madagascar with scenes in Europe thus underlining the transnational space in which the group operates. The fact that some of these musicians were migrants with the emotional burden of leaving their homeland emerged as part of their own narrative as well as the theme of some of their songs. Personal narratives, song lyrics and debates with the public highlighted that they shared the same concerns about the poverty and environmental damage of Madagascar as those in the group who continued to live in Madagascar, and illustrated the feasibility of a transnational public sphere of public engagement. And finally following two of the musicians on a journey by car, boat and on foot to a very remote part of the island where a group of local people are engaged in re-forestation and reclaiming their former territory. showed a natural landscape of great beauty as well as the danger of its destruction. It also raised hopes that the actions of engaged individuals can make a positive difference.

If we now look at three extracts from the film we can see how the film makes meaning by these various filmic means

#### *[Clip 1: Regis Gizavo](#)*

Themes raised include the following:

- Poverty creates very difficult conditions for people in Madagascar, here exemplified by a poor region in the south. The song by Regis Gizavo, [Malaso](#), speaks about the ways in which corruption and crime makes the life a misery for cattle herders.
- For musicians and music professionals the capital Antananarivo is a passage obligé, a place of opportunity in the global South, whereas Paris functions as a similar hub in the global North
- Leaving Madagascar and making a living in Europe is a culture shock even for musicians who sees this as a major opportunity in their career, the need to adapt is painful, and for Malagasy the significance of rice is paramount so that its absence from a daily diet is harshly felt
- Regis' song 'Black is the colour of the drongo bird' sends a strong anti-racist message in the guise of singing about a Malagasy bird

#### *[Clip 2: Justin Vali with Dama in the van](#)*

Themes raised include the following:

- Many migrants from Madagascar – here the valiha player and singer Justin Vali – retain strong connections with their regions of origin and many are to-ing and fro-ing between their home villages and towns in Madagascar and Europe.
- Nostalgia for home remains very strong especially where people are forced by poverty to leave their homes

### Clip 3: Ricky Olombelo

In this clip the film superimposes contrasting images over a song with explicitly political lyrics.

Themes raised include the following:

- There is wide-spread exploitation of Madagascar by multi-nationals. (In our research we had focused for example on the activities of Rio Tinto in the Fort Dauphin region where the exploitation of ilmenite took place in areas of primary forest by the sea and threatened the ecology of the forest and the livelihood of local fishermen).
- The clip shows conflicting images of beauty and poverty, where good technical provisions available to some individuals (e.g. laptops) are contrasted to the appalling state of the infrastructures

### *Screenings and audience reactions*

Between September 2016 and November 2017 selected screenings were followed by Question and Answer sessions and debates with the audiences. I was accompanied by the film maker Cesar Paes and/or the musician and project consultant Dama. Screenings included the Screenplay Festival, Shetland Islands September 2016; the Southampton Film Week, Turner Sims concert hall, November 2016; the Festival dei Popoli, Florence, November 2016; a film screening with a concert by the Madagascar All Stars in La Reunion, Feb 2017; Black International Cinema Festival , Berlin May 2017; a special screening at the Iwalewa House of African Art, Bayreuth, July 2017; the Festival du Insulaire de Groix, August 2017, and the Jean Rouch Festival, Paris, November 2017

The film was also released in cinemas from June 2017, on dvd in December 2017 and it continues to be screened until today.

Questionnaires were distributed in 4 different languages (English, French, German, Italian) depending on the film's audience. They asked for anonymised biodata from the audience and then solicited 1 overall response (excellent to poor) to the film followed by 12 quantitative questions about responses to the content, the music and the images , with grades from 1 to 5, and 5 qualitative open questions about the major themes to elicit free commentary.

### *Evaluation*

Conclusions from a detailed evaluation of the first six screenings (Shetland Islands, Southampton, Florence, La Reunion, Bayreuth, Berlin) were as follows:

- the film achieved its purpose of emotionally and intellectually engaging very diverse audiences with Madagascar, its music and the associated themes, especially in the need to protect the environment and in using art to do so.
- It aroused the audiences' interest, achieved insights and a wish to know more (impact).
- The artists' activism was overwhelmingly appreciated and endorsed although there was occasional scepticism as to the possibility of artists/ music making a difference.
- The Southampton and Florence audiences were the least interested in the passages filmed in Europe, whereas those in La Reunion and in Scotland were pronouncedly so.

The questionnaire also raised the topic of internal and international migration as a focus of the film. This was the least recognised theme by all the audiences, although it was appreciated during and after the debate.

### *Discussion*

Why might there be such a lack of recognition of the migration theme?

As the subsequent debates showed, there is a prevalent image in public and private representations of migrants as needy refugees or dangerous troublemakers which does not fit the talented musicians featured in the film. Hence although the film meant to challenge such simplistic representations by showing migrant musicians as activist artists with an agenda shared by engaged people in Europe and Africa alike, the film does not sufficiently thematise that there is indeed an alternative view of migration to be recognised. Hence whilst the shared social, environmental, humanist, and non-racist values of the specific artists was appreciated it did not translate into a comment on migrants and their transcultural capital.

We identified this difficulty of recognising the contribution of migrants through a prevalent split between two contradictory discourses in public life:

On the one hand there is the discourse of the cosmopolitans – discourses of *mobility* with their association of the free flows of people, services and goods; on the other hand there is the discourse of migration which is a discourse of ‘the Other’. Here the cosmopolitan metaphors of free ‘flows’ are replaced by metaphors of waves and floods; masses overwhelming and threatening ‘our’ societies and way of life.

However the film works very strongly as a portrait of six engaged artists of Malagasy origin who through their music try to make a difference to some of the most important issues of our contemporary world.

*Research publications* (Figure 10 for full film credits and song Tsy Miraharaha with subtitles)

(2017) Globalized culture flows, transnational fields and transcultural capital. In A. Triandafyllidou (ed.) Handbook on Migration and Globalisation . Edward Elgar.

- (2013) Cultural diversity in Europe: a story of mutual benefit. RSCAS publication. EUI
- (2011) *Cultural Globalization and Music. African Musicians in Transnational Networks*. Palgrave (with Nadia Kiwan)
- (2011). ‘Singing a new song? Transnational Migration, Methodological Nationalism and Cosmopolitan Perspectives. In special Issue *Music and Migration. Music and Arts in Action : Vol 3, No 3* (with Nina Glick-Schiller) <http://musicandartsinaction.net/index.php/maia/article/view/singingnewsong>
- (2010). ‘Transnational musicians’ networks across Africa and Europe’. In K. Knott and D. McLoughlin (eds.) *Diasporas: Concepts, Identities, Intersections*. Zed publication. (with Gibert and Kiwan)
- (2009) ‘Inspiration triangulaire: musique, tourisme et développement à Madagascar’. Numéro spécial des *Cahiers d’études africaines : Mise en tourisme de la culture : réseaux, représentations et pratiques* (with Marie-Pierre Gibert).
- (2009) ‘Transnational flows, networks and “transcultural capital”. Reflections on researching migrant networks through linguistic ethnography’. In Stef Slembrouck, Jim Collins and Mike Baynham (eds.) *Globalization and Languages in Contact: Scale, Migration, and Communicative Practices*. Continuum.
- (2006) ‘Beyond the Diaspora: Transnational Practices as Transcultural Capital’, in Meinhof, Ulrike H. and Anna Triandafyllidou (eds.) *Transcultural Europe. Cultural Policy in a Changing Europe*. 200-222 (with Anna Triandafyllidou).
- (2005) ‘Malagasy song-writer musicians in transnational settings’, *Moving Worlds*, 5 (1): 144-158 (with Zafimahaleo Rasolofondraosolo ).
- (2005) ‘Initiating a public : Malagasy music and live audiences in differentiated cultural contexts’, in Sonia Livingstone (ed.), *Audiences and Publics : When cultural engagement matters for the public sphere*, Bristol-Portland, OR, Intellect : 115-138.
- (2003), ‘Popular Malagasy music and the construction of cultural identities’, in S. Makoni and U. H. Meinhof (eds), *Africa and Applied Linguistics. AILA REVIEW*, 16, 127–48. (with Zafimahaleo Rasolofondraosolo ).

*This project is an AHRC Follow-on Project of:*

TNMundi: Diaspora as social and cultural practice

Principal investigator: Ulrike Meinhof, University of Southampton

Co-Investigator: Nadia Kiwan, University of Aberdeen

Research orgs: Universities of Southampton and Aberdeen

Funding Source(s): For research AHRC, the Diaspora Migration and Identity programme

For cultural events: several funding bodies, most notably the Arts Council South-East (UK) , Goethe Cultural Institut (CGM, Antananarivo, Madagascar), Vazimba Productions (Antananarivo) Institut français (Rabat, Morocco) British Council, Morocco.

Dates: 11/2006 – 3/2010

# Divided Pasts – Design Futures



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

Adrian Grant (Principal Investigator)

David Coyles (Co-Investigator)

Brandon Hamber (Co-Investigator)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Ulster University

Derry City and Strabane District Council

The Nerve Centre

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC

## DATES OF FUNDING

January 2019 – January 2021

Divided Pasts – Design Futures is an interdisciplinary research project that aims to understand how urban design influenced by historical and heritage data can be used to address issues such as ethnic/religious/class segregation in cities, as well as contributing to environmental sustainability and better public health. The project team is made up of academic researchers from Ulster University with interests in history, policy, architecture and design, planning, psychology, and peace and conflict studies. They are joined by project partners in local government departments of planning, regeneration and the environment; partners in the museums and

heritage sector, and creative social entrepreneurs who provide digital fabrication skills to people living in an area of high unemployment and low educational attainment.



The edge of a 1970s public housing development in the Fountain estate, which sits in the shadow of the 17th century St. Columb's Cathedral and the 400 year old Walls of Derry.

The project begins from the premise that good urban design should be cognisant of the needs of the people who live in, and use, the space in question. Therefore, urban design and regeneration projects should build from and be respectful of emotional connections to space and place formation. We intend to explore these connections through a historical prism by focusing on emotional memory and the connections people feel to the spaces in which they have lived, worked and socialised throughout their lives. The resultant research data will then be used to facilitate collaborative

work between the researchers, case study area residents, local stakeholders, and planners, designers and architects.

Derry/Londonderry serves as the case study city and provides the ideal setting for the research and dissemination process. Residential segregation has been a reality in the city for centuries, and this became much more pronounced after 1969, due in large part to the violent conflict commonly known as the Troubles. A series of large scale urban regeneration projects took place before and during the early years of the conflict, completely changing the urban fabric of the city at a time when the lives of city residents were upended by war and conflict. These processes contributed to heightened senses of loss felt for the places of the past, despite the very real difficulties associated with the slum like conditions endured by people prior to regeneration. This is usually bound up with dearly held (sometimes nostalgic) memories of tightly-knit working class communities, experiencing a shared poverty in densely populated areas made up of grid-form terraced streets. The clearance of this housing, the rebuilding of modern, lower density housing in new street patterns, and the dispersal of surplus population to suburban housing estates and further afield, are all lamented, though often with a hardened realism that much of the process was necessary. Conversely, emotional connections were made with



Free Derry Corner forms part of a large area of memorialisation and political messaging. The famous 'Petrol Bomber' mural is accompanied by posters associated with non-mainstream republican groups, often referred to as 'dissident' republicans.

the 'new' places created by regeneration. Some of these are positive, but many are negative and associated with violent conflict.

The research focuses on a specific case study area in the city. The Bogside, Bishop Street and Fountain are three distinct, adjoining neighbourhoods that have undergone significant regeneration since the 1950s. They also experienced some of the worst violence associated with the Troubles. With the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and the ending of the worst of the violence, an associated

peace dividend was expected. For neighbourhoods like those in the case study area, this dividend never materialised. The neighbourhoods remain segregated along religious lines and experience some of the highest levels of deprivation in the UK. The Northern Ireland Executive Office has ringfenced the area for significant investment in the coming years through its Urban Villages programme. This strategy is designed 'to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension'. One particular aim of the strategy is to improve the physical environment.

The project partnership between Ulster University and Derry City and Strabane District Council will ensure that the research feeds into proposed public realm and other urban design projects in the case study area in the coming years, particularly those coming under the Urban Villages programme. In order to ensure this works effectively, a multi-stage approach has been taken to the research and dissemination. The first stage, in which the research team is currently engaged, sees the collection of over 50 oral history interviews with current and former residents of the case study area. These interviews take a life story approach, but focus mainly on the relationship between people and the built environment over time. Initial interviews have confirmed that there is a deep sense of personal connection between the past and the present, which is also manifested in the built environment (see attached images from case study areas). Archival, photographic and secondary literature research is also ongoing. The second phase of the project will see detailed analysis of the data take place, while a public exhibition is also planned. Concurrently, residents will take part in digital fabrication workshops, both to learn new skills and to create 3D 'neighbourhoods of the future' models based on the historical research data.

Drone and VR footage will also be captured and compared with historic maps and photographs, in order to better understand the transformation of the space through time. Finally, the project dissemination will concentrate mainly on the drafting of a ‘collaborative design statement’, co-authored by residents, the researchers, local government officials, designers, and others. This will be achieved through a series of workshops and seminars, and the document will form a guide for current and future regeneration plans in the area.

It is the ultimate intention of the research team to refine and test this approach in the case study city, and then begin to suggest it as a methodology for collaborative planning in cities emerging from violent conflict internationally.

The Twitter handles are:

Principal Investigator Adrian Grant: [@AdrianoGranto](#)

Co-Investigator Brandon Hamber: [@BrandonHamber](#)

# After the Earth's Violent Sway: the tangible and intangible legacies of a natural disaster



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

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## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

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## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC GCRF

## DATES OF FUNDING

April 2017 – March 2020

This three-year collaborative research project explores, analyses and documents the aftermath of the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that shook Nepal in April 2015, followed by months of powerful aftershocks. As such, it contributes to the understanding of the longterm societal, political and cultural impacts of disasters, especially in aid-dependent low-income countries. The study is of interest to all parties involved in policy making related

to the protection, documentation and reconstruction of Nepal's physical cultural heritage; to government departments in Nepal; and to international agencies involved in delivering relief and development aid.



The project takes an inductive stance (the forthcoming edited volume *Epicentre to Aftermath* emerges from its [January 2019 conference](#) and much of the data it has collected and analysed may be found in the extensive [SWAY Digital Library](#)). This archives a large body of available published material covering the Nepal earthquakes, with a particular emphasis on media and grey literature, documenting and preserving the

legacy of the earthquake for the foreseeable future. With currently over 1800 catalogued items, keyworded and searchable in Nepali and English, and with its [extensive bibliographies](#), the database allows researchers and the public to access material related to the earthquake in order to research, reflect upon and analyse the interlaced activities and events that followed in its wake.

While natural hazard events such as floods and earthquakes are marked by a sudden onset, their post-impact period—the duration of the ‘disaster’—is not easily defined. Based on analysing material from our database, we can demonstrate how the disaster topically frays as a causal factor with temporal distance from the event and the later departure from the paradigm of reconstruction. Many studies of disasters work deductively and shy away from the complex task of analysing the social and political realities of the aftermath; instead, they concentrate on disaster recovery and the supposed re-establishment of normal social, economic and political routines (Lindell 2013: 810). Our research project embraces the complexity of post-disaster change without postulating the archetype of a return to normal.



The fact that the project involves a team of *Nepal specialists* rather than generic disaster management experts has especially influenced its shape and research agenda (see project website <https://sway.soscbaha.org>). With their profound understanding of Nepal's history and politics, Whelton, Liechty and Raj adopt a comparative perspective, setting the most recent earthquake into analytical sequence with earlier disasters and

exploring the political and bureaucratic parallels. What emerges from their and Liechty's work is a critical review of high-level decision making that sought mainly to preserve established social orders. Meanwhile, focusing on more recent history, Hutt explored the effects of the 2015 earthquake on the political process of promulgating a new constitution for Nepal. This work, together with Baniya's analysis of the establishment and workings of the National Reconstruction Authority, analyses the direct effects of the earthquake within the contemporary political discourse.



The project does not limit its analysis of the legacies of the earthquake to a narrowly defined political field. While Hutt explores reactions to the earthquake and its aftermath in *Nepali poetry and song*, Lotter explores personal reactions to

the disaster in a documentation of *earthquake related tattoos*, inked after the disaster. Moving from the personal to the collective, Tamang, Lotter and Baniya explore the role of outsiders within the reconstruction discourse. For Baniya, who studied *housing reconstruction in a small marginal community*, the role of the village

outsider is represented by a Nepali celebrity who funds reconstruction but fails to establish local needs, while Tamang examines social media self-representation by foreign anthropologists who stake claims to representing 'their' village and owning expertise in the reconstruction discourse. External involvement in reconstruction is also the topic of Lotter's work on heritage activism. UNESCO and donor organisations not only provided financial support and expert advice but also offered to manage projects and co-ordinate donor organisations at specific sites. Such prominent outside involvement came to be perceived by heritage activists as reducing authenticity and local ownership, and as increasingly counterproductive to the identity formation that the reconstruction of living heritage can offer. [Hutt's work](#) on the *iconisation of Dharahara*, a 19<sup>th</sup> century tower that collapsed in the last two earthquakes, draws upon media and literary discourse in Nepali to question why this landmark rather than the more prominent World Heritage sites loomed so large and became a rallying point for a resurgence of Nepali hill nationalism.

With an array of detailed studies into the legacies of the disaster this project analyses and contributes to the interpretation of the tumultuous series of events that followed in the wake.



For more information, please visit the [Project Website](#) and [Blog](#)

The Principal and Co-Investigators of this project are [Michael Hutt](#) (PI), [Stefanie Lotter](#) (Co-I) and [Mark Liechty](#) (Co-I). Researchers are Jeevan Baniya, Yogesh Raj, Seira Tamang and John Whelpton. The Project Administrator is [Sunil Pun](#).

Research Organisations involved in the project are [SOAS](#),

University of London; [Social Science Baha](#), Kathmandu; and [Martin Chautari](#), Kathmandu

Those involved from the [Digital Library](#) include Erich Kesse, Catherine Buxton and Khem Shreesh.

# Rising from the Depths

## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

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Annamaria La Chimia  
Paul Lane

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

University of Nottingham  
UNESCO  
The British Museum  
World Monuments Fund  
WIOMSA  
British Institute of Eastern Africa  
Society for Underwater Technology  
3deep Media  
kaleidoscopio  
K.M.F.R.I  
Eco Africa  
Nautical Archaeology Society  
Zavora Marine Lab

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC GCRF

## Scoping case study 1: Creating benefits for local communities from Maritime Museums in Mozambique

Scoping meetings in Mozambique at the Fisheries Museum in Maputo (December 2017) and the Naval Museum at the Ilha de Mocambique (February 2018) identified the need for these institutions to forge practical links with their respective local communities in an effort to offer activities and resources that can be used to benefit them. Both museums have been constructed or restored with international development aid funding, and they share a mission that includes attracting foreign tourist audiences as well as catering for domestic audiences. Capacity and activities to local domestic audiences is currently lacking. As with many other museums across the world



Naval Museum Ilha de Moçambique

that have been funded by international development organisations, there is a need for research on the actual benefits that these maritime institutions offer to their communities.

Through our meetings and the Network meeting held in Eduardo Mondalne University, Maputo, on February 2018, the Rising from the Depth network facilitated contacts between these maritime museums

and the Instituto Superior de Artes e Cultura (ISArC) in Mozambique to develop community engagement with museums and maritime heritage in Mozambique.



Museu das Pescas, Maputo

In the first funding call, a small project grant was awarded to Early Career Researcher Dr Rosalie Hans at the University of Nottingham and Daniel Inoue at ISArC. The project, entitled *Making Maritime Museums Matter in Mozambique*, aims to scope the current cultural, economic and social impact these maritime museums have on their communities, and to co-create potential ways of increasing the museums' relevance. The research will lead to knowledge

exchange between the museums, the communities and the Rising from the Depths network on how to improve the museums' outreach, thus increasing feelings of ownership as well as recognising the importance of the community's identity and maritime culture. The research will take place over one month, with 14 days spent in each museum location where community meetings will take place and interviews with stakeholders conducted. The project will work with community members on generating new ideas to make the museums work for them, aiming to enhance the impact of the museums locally. It is intended that this small study will provide a step towards making the two investigated maritime museums more relevant and useful to their surrounding maritime communities by refocusing their mission on improving quality of life locally rather than the fraught promise of generating economic growth through cultural tourism.

#### Scoping case study 2: Coastal hazards and marine heritage in East Africa

Scoping work, carried out at Bournemouth University by PDRA Cari Ballesteros and Col Dr Luciana Esteves, is modelling the present and future effects of coastal changes on marine heritage sites in East Africa. This work will provide valuable information to coastal managers and potential investors in East Africa and inform decision-making on measures relevant to the conservation of coastal and maritime cultural heritage. Coastal areas are exposed to multiple natural hazards, and their impacts and frequency are expected to increase as a result of climate change and anthropogenic pressures. This poses a serious risk to coastal populations, who have settled

along the shoreline over time because of milder climate, trading, fishing and natural resources. In East Africa, the relationship between society and the sea has created an important and rich cultural heritage, which can benefit local communities in working towards a sustainable development. However, coastal developments and new investments (e.g. mining, oil and gas extraction, ports, tourism) coupled with climate change and poor planning and coastal management are having serious negative impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities, which strongly depend on the natural environment.

A number of indices have been created for the assessment of climate change, natural hazards and social vulnerabilities in coastal areas. Our scoping work represents one of the first attempts to apply such indices to East Africa. Additionally, existing approaches have not considered the contribution of human-induced coastal change and its impacts on maritime cultural heritage. Within this context, this work is developing an exposure index for coastal change in East Africa, considering the main coastal hazards, anthropogenic drivers and physical and social coastal characteristics.

As a first stage, an Exposure Index to coastal erosion and inundation has been calculated at a regional scale considering four physical variables (relief, waves, winds and potential surge) and the role of coastal habitats (mangrove, coral reef and seagrass) in offering natural protection against erosion and inundation (Figure 1). This Index was calculated using the Integrated Valuation of Environmental Services and Tradeoffs (InVEST) model (Sharp et al 2018), an open-source tool. In the next stages, these results will be integrated with erosion rates and census data, as well as information about coastal projects (e.g. port developments, restoration projects, fuel extraction activities), which can increase/decrease in the level of exposure to coastal change. The integration of the Exposure Index to coastal change and cultural heritage sites will identify the locations and assets most at risk, which should be prioritised for more detailed analysis.

# Praxis: Arts and Humanities for Global Challenges



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

Prof Stuart Taberner (PI)

Prof Paul Cooke (Co-I)

Dr Deena Dajani (Postdoctoral Researcher)

Inés Soria-Donlan (Project Manager)

Lauren Wray (Project Officer)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

University of Leeds

## FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC GCRF

## DATES OF FUNDING

January 2018 – December 2021

In the last four years, the AHRC have made over 200 awards under the AHRC-GCRF and Newton portfolio. These awards draw on the AHRC's strategic commitment to foster innovative, highly collaborative and cross-disciplinary research that addresses global development challenges. Reflecting on the last four years, key questions about how we collate research findings and quantify the collective impact of AHRC-GCRF research on global challenges have emerged. Specifically, what are the thematic focal points and synergies that can be drawn out across these projects?

*Praxis: Arts and Humanities for Global Development* is an ambitious and outwardly collaborative AHRC-GCRF funded project based at the University of Leeds that aims to explore these questions and to champion the unique and distinctive contribution that arts and humanities research can make to global development challenges. The project will bridge the substantial portfolio of AHRC-GCRF research, bringing together UK and global partners for a series of three-day international workshops (Nexus Events) and smaller one-day learning events around four focal, intersecting themes: heritage, conflict and displacement, resilience, and global health. The first series of Praxis events – on the theme of heritage – will connect AHRC-GCRF researchers and partners to maximise and share learning across the full breadth and depth of AHRC-GCRF heritage research, as well as influence policy and practice at scale.

*Praxis'* first learning event, in collaboration with Dr Hanal Morel from Heritage Futures at UCL, is on the theme of heritage and policy and it aims to strengthen the connections between research, policy and practice. It will provide UK based heritage researchers with practical guidance on how to engage with the policy process and translate research findings into policy impact. A second learning event in early 2020, in collaboration with Dr Tahrat Shahid, GCRF Challenge Leader for Food Systems at UKRI, will use the context of food and heritage to frame a critical discussion around how AHRC-GCRF projects navigate the balance between competing local and global interests and ideas. Each learning event will culminate in a podcast episode recording which will build on and open up the discussions from the day to a wider audience, to serve as an ongoing resource for future heritage researchers and partners to use.

Drawing the heritage series to a close, Praxis will host a 3-day international workshop in Lebanon titled "Heritage for Global Challenges" which will bring together researchers and partner organisations from the Global South and the UK, to explore how the full spectrum of heritage research: the environmental, cultural, virtual and digital, contributes to and hinders development, as well as the critical next steps for heritage research. Together, participants will contribute to writing a working paper that documents the legacy of AHRC-GCRF heritage projects, provides policy recommendations and informs the ongoing development of heritage research.

The three events are informed by and build on 40+ conversations between Dr Deena Dajani and projects across the heritage portfolio. The conversations have laid the foundations for an exciting programme of events that will strengthen knowledge exchange and connectivity within and beyond the heritage sector, illuminate pathways to policy and impact and ultimately, shape the future discourse around heritage research, arts and humanities and global challenges.

Visit our [website](#) for more information on *Praxis* and the heritage nexus and learning events, including information on how you can register to attend upcoming events.

*Praxis* is a 3-year project led by Professor Stuart Taberner (Principal Investigator), Professor Paul Cooke (Co-Investigator), Dr Deena Dajani (Postdoctoral Researcher), Inés Soria-Donlan (Project Manager), and Lauren Wray (Project Officer), merging a newly formed *Praxis* team with the existing team behind another AHRC-GCRF project titled *Changing the Story*, also based at the University of Leeds.

# Creative Interruptions: grassroots creativity, State structures and disconnection as a space for 'radical openness'



## PRINCIPAL AND CO-INVESTIGATORS

### PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Professor Sarita Malik

### CO-INVESTIGATORS

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## POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

Dr Photini Vrikki

Dr Panayiota Demetriou (Yiota)

## RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

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University of Strathclyde

Queen's University Belfast

Sheffield Hallam University

University of Sussex

## INTERNATIONAL/ NATIONAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Runnymede Trust

CRCI  
Filmlab: Palestine  
Voices that Shake  
Greenwich Inclusion Project  
Preet Nagar  
Green Shoot Productions

#### FUNDING SOURCES

AHRC

#### DATES OF FUNDING

October 2016- March 2020

*Creative Interruptions* examines the role of the arts, media and creativity in challenging forms of exclusion, including racism. The project has worked with a range of collaborators to understand the lived experiences of communities that have been disenfranchised, and how they are affected by institutional racisms, faith-based conflicts and/or nationalisms. The project has explored the creativity that these circumstances produce; whether in terms of everyday forms of creative expression or in the work of artists, writers and filmmakers.



Through five, internationally-linked strands of work (across the UK, Northern Ireland, Palestine and India), the study has sought to consolidate different types of knowledge (academic, community and creative) through co-production and collaboration with local communities, organisations, and creative practitioners that work with different artforms.

Artist Samia Singh, Weaving a future picture of Punjab

#### PROJECT STRANDS

1. Creative anti-racisms Arts and Inequalities (Film, Podcasts and Anti-Racism) – led by Professor Sarita Malik and Black and Asian creative practitioners.
2. Intensive workplace regimes (Film and Workplace Regimes) – led by Professor Ben Rogaly and migrant and long-term residents, food factory and warehouse workers in the East of England.

3. Creative Connections and Civil rights (Community Theatre and Applied Drama) – led by Dr Michael Pierse and refugee, migrant and LGBT communities in Northern Ireland.
4. Cinematic Interruptions (Race, Media, and Partition Stories) – led by Dr Anandi Ramamurthy, Palestinian filmmakers, and solidarity international networks.
5. Disconnected Heritage (Travel Writing, Contested heritage, and Visual Art) – led by Dr Churnjeet Mahn and a cross-section of faiths in Punjab and the Punjabi diaspora in Scotland.

As well as more traditional forms of research such as interviews and workshops, the research team has worked with international community-based collaborators to produce creative outputs using film, self-published magazines, virtual reality, theatre, and writing. This has opened up a space to hear stories and perspectives that systematically go unheard as well as to foreground how different forms of cultural production take place in our everyday lives.

## OUTPUTS



Installation by Taha Ahmad

BAME filmmakers and podcasters have used the *Creative Interruptions* platform as a response to the institutional practices and cultural norms that generate disparate racialised outcomes. For example, BAFTA-nominated director George Ampsonah worked with the team in strand one, to produce a documentary tracing how black and Asian filmmakers have used screen culture to address racism in the UK since the 1970s. Alongside this, our collaboration

with Runnymede Trust was established through a joint-open call, offering a resource and showcase platform for practitioners whose works engage with the ideas of race, access, and representation. Commissions for this include:

- Sally Fenoux Barleycorn's short film, *Unburied*. A visual poem of pain and remembrance illustrating the refugee crisis in Europe.
- *Alors on Danse*, by Director, Choreographer, and Creative Producer of *Afrique Au Monde*, Irene Ashu. A short film exploring African cultural diffusion, following five iconic dancers through the streets of Paris

reflecting the ways in which African dance has travelled the world, how it has been appropriated, and how it has evolved.

All three films can be viewed [here](#).

*Creative Interruptions* research in Northern Ireland has deployed participatory theatre with diverse marginalised groups, audiences and schools from across Belfast's sectarian divide. This project has engaged and enabled people experiencing disenfranchisement, as well as school students, over thousands of theatregoers, and other members of the public, changing mindsets, developing discussions and causing reflection on fraught topics. It has produced profoundly significant effects for those involved in its development phase, in terms of confidence building, articulating marginalised voices and concerns, and helping deal with traumatic life experiences through theatre. Performances have led to a wider impact on audiences through our '['We'll Walk Hand in Hand' stage play](#)', along with a radio play 'Departures', a short film 'We Must Dissent' and community performances of plays about refugee and LGBTQ+ experiences. This has been supported by a related exhibition, talks, TV documentary, and public events. Watch one of the documentary outputs on civil rights [here](#).

In the East of England, *Creative Interruptions* research has provided a space for the stories of people working in warehouses and factories, whose moving accounts also reflected on their creative lives within and beyond the workplace. Some of these can be found in this set of short films: [Workers](#). Their stories reveal some of the harsh employment conditions in contemporary capitalist workplaces, and make transparent the power inequalities inherent in them, towards challenging the oppressive workplace conditions and representative labels often used to stereotype such as 'factory workers', 'warehouse workers' or 'migrants'.



Beyond the Wall member with our co-created puppet, at the Creative Interruptions Festival in June 2019

In collaboration with FilmLab Palestine, *Creative Interruptions* has also investigated the way cinema has been used by Palestinians to articulate the dreams, histories, memories, and struggles of the Palestinian people for national liberation. Considering cinema as a form of cultural expression, this research strand has been exploring how film has been used in this specific context to reveal the experiences of Palestinian people under cultural oppression. The strand has produced a series of organised screenings and events, such as Palestinian Film Festivals, in order to share and explore how Palestinian films are watched and received by diverse audiences. The research has created a platform for the critical appreciation of the works through encouraging social awareness about the experiences of Palestinian people that are depicted in the films shown. More information about the screenings can be found [here](#).

In India, *Creative Interruptions* offered a temporary home, through residency opportunities, for a group of artists based close to the India-Pakistan border in Preet Nagar. Including living memories of Partition, the work is responding to issues of memories and loss across borders. Their work resulted in the creation of *Mela*, a cultural festival where local communities had the opportunity to engage in the artwork created during the residency programme. In 2019, the *Mela* (festival) was held at the historical site of Punjabi literature and culture, Preet Nagar.

Preet Nagar *MELA* invited its audiences to think differently about what is shared across that border, and about the local traditions and communities that form the cultural fabric of Punjab. Part of the art exhibited during the *Mela*, as well as a Virtual Reality documentary about the *Mela*, was shown at the British Film Institute as part of the *Creative Interruptions Festival of Arts and Activism*, which took place in June 2019 (<https://creativeinterruptions.com/festival/>).

The *Creative Interruptions Festival of Arts and Activism* brought together activists, artists, academics and policy-makers, aiming to create new networks and facilitate local, national, and global debates surrounding the arts, media, diversity and inequality. It combined talks, roundtable discussions, creative presentations, workshops, performances, photographic installations, screenings of 2D films and 3D immersive video, and an installation of mobile protest robots, Probots (<https://creativeinterruptions.com/operate-a-human-sized-protest-robot/>).

One roundtable explored ideas and assumptions which resist dominant narratives about Palestine, highlighting the experiences and obstacles that have existed in trying to build a Palestinian film industry and culture under occupation. Additionally, there was a session on the interpretation and legacies of the struggle for civil rights in the North of Ireland on the 50th anniversary or the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association's campaign for equality. The Festival included a musical concert by Indian Bengali singer-songwriter, Moushumi Bhowmik, and a performance of a giant puppet that manifested border and identity politics, which was co-created on site by festival attendees and the artistic collective Beyond the Wall. The puppeteers facilitated an ongoing workshop

to co-build a 15ft tall puppet, that amplified perspectives of people living in/at border sites – geographic, cultural, or otherwise.

Attendees at the *Creative Interruptions Festival* were able to co-build the final stages of the puppet's construction with members of *Beyond the Wall*; making decisions and executions about the puppet's appearance and movement based on conversations with the puppeteers about cultural identity and expression. The *Creative Interruptions* festival was closed with an inspirational and emotive keynote delivered by British rapper, poet, and political activist, *Lowkey*, who spoke about race and class in contemporary politics in the context of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. To watch all keynotes including *Lowkey*'s talk follow this link: <https://creativeinterruptions.com/festival/>

The Festival included a co-organised and curated roundtable event with Runnymede Trust that prompted a discussion with leading artists-activists, and policy-making representatives to discuss the persisting problems caused by inequalities in the arts and creative industries. Participants included Bidisha SK Mamata, Euella Jackson, Shagufta K. Iqbal, Jane Hackett, Charles Lauder and chaired by Jenny Waldman.

Watch the roundtable discussion here: <https://creativeinterruptions.com/festival/>.

You'll find further information at <https://creativeinterruptions.com/>.

*Images: Sarita Malik*

AHRC would like to thank all the AHRC researchers who contributed to the 2019 #HeritageCaseStudies. Please note that this is a compilation of material published on the heritage-research.org website, and any use of images or content should be associated with the individual project itself.