

“Where does Facebook live?” : mapping identities in Newcastle upon Tyne, England

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ABSTRACT For the past eight years my colleagues and I have been working with diverse groups of young people, to understand their sense of place and use(s) of the city. Between September 2015 and November 2016 we organised and facilitated a number of workshops utilising participatory mapping techniques. The objective of the workshops was to develop our understanding of how the participants identified with their immediate physical context and with the wider city. This paper documents phase one of the ‘Mapping the City’ project. The paper also describes how participatory mapping techniques have informed my own architectural pedagogy and the practices of some of the students I have tutored.

KEYWORDS right to the city, participatory mapping, young people, architectural pedagogy

Introduction

Young people are often dictated to, overlooked, or deliberately omitted from the processes leading to commissioning, designing, procuring and managing buildings and public spaces. For the past eight years my colleagues and I have been working with groups of young people, trying to understand their place in the city, and to represent and disseminate this through blog posts on ‘the accidental youth club’¹, in articles, academic papers and exhibitions (including ‘PlayToon’, 2012; ‘Urban Fictions’ and ‘Traversive’, 2014; ‘en_counter’ and ‘Mapping the City II’ 2016). The ‘Mapping the City’ project was developed with Juice, a multi-art form organisation made by, with and for children and young people.

Between September 2015 and November 2016 we organised and facilitated a number of workshops utilising participatory mapping techniques with groups of: school pupils studying art or geography; clients at a city centre youth club run by the YMCA; and young people using Newcastle City Library during the October 2016 half-term holiday. The workshop participants were aged between

10 and 18. The objective of the workshops was to develop our understanding of how the participants identified with their immediate physical context and with the wider city. The majority involved with the schools’ and library’s workshops were at the younger end of that age spectrum. The participants at the youth club were at the older end of the age range and mostly émigrés or first and second generation children of naturalised immigrants.

A map is a manifestation of authority²

Cartographer and map historian, John Harley, (1989; 2002) challenged the orthodox belief that maps objectively represent landscapes. He drew attention to the subjective choices made by cartographers which reproduce their ideologies. Harley’s work has been criticised (see Crampton, 2003) for not challenging the ontological idea that the map-artefact nevertheless represents a discernible truth.

Prof. John Pickles (2004, p. 145) proposes,

“[m]aps no longer are seen to simply *represent* territory, but are understood as *producing* it; in important ways ‘maps *precede* territory’, they

inscribe boundaries and construct objects that in turn *become* our realities.” [emphasis added].

We introduced the workshop participants to the concept of maps as social, political and economic constructs by questioning what is included on an ‘official’ map³. The participants quickly grasped their lives were not being represented on a map of cultural landmarks produced for tourists. The authority of the map-artefact, implied by the printed document in the classroom, was further, and dramatically, challenged (usually to gasps of shocked delight) by stabbing a pencil through the map to indicate a mysterious, secret location.

Participatory Mapping

Considering map-making as a process can be revealing of the time, culture, and politics in which they were made. They speak for the individual cartographer, as it is the map-maker who ultimately decides what to include and, equally significantly, what to exclude. Mapping has become a staple technique for ethnographers seeking to reveal intangible heritage because mapping is accessible anywhere. We chose to use felt tip pens and cartridge paper, but it can be even more low-tech, making use of any materials to hand, even just scratching in the earth.

As academics working across the disciplines of architecture and geography, collaborating with a youth organisation concerned with education and career development for young people in the arts and creative industries sectors, our objective for this work was to explore the subjective, ‘lived’ experiences of young people across the city (and the north east region⁴). We were neither concerned to achieve a representative sample nor to repeat the same exercises in a controlled way across different workshops. Accordingly, participants were self-selecting, or selected by the schools around timetabling constraints, and the findings were not analysed against predetermined metrics.

Our improvisatory and reactive approach to the research enabled us to learn from, and respond to, adaptations and innovations by the participants themselves and to incorporate these in subsequent workshops. One exercise, for example, was developed by three sixth



Fig. 1 “Mappa Mundi” workshop at Benfield School (author’s photograph. Consent received from the school and the participants for use of the photograph in relation to this project.)

formers in a geography class at Berwick Academy. Taking as their starting point the artist Grayson Perry’s “Map of Nowhere”⁵, a self-portrait inspired by the Hereford “Mappa Mundi”, the exercise begins with tracing an outline around a prone member of the group and uses the body as a metaphor for mapping young people’s social and temporal relationships (fig. 1). It has proven popular with more boisterous classes of younger pupils. The apparently anarchic nature of some of the exercises undertaken being a part of the process of investigation; this aspect is considered below in relation to Bjorn Sletto’s “Theatre for the Performance of Identity”.

Theatre for the Performance of Identity

Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge propose “maps are constantly in a state of becoming” (2007, p. 335), that is they acquire their ‘map-ness’ only through their enactment to solve relational problems: Where is x? How do I get to y? How far is z? (Kitchin et al., 2013). The process of map-making is performative and, in a group context, prompts in the participants the sharing and contesting of personal and

collective memories of places, community narratives and traditions (fig. 2). Sletto states, “[m]apping workshops become theatres for the performances of identities, the reading and interpretation of histories, and the production of material and imaginary landscapes that participants consider [to be] ‘theirs’.” (2009: p. 443). If we shift our focus from the product to the process of production then, in seeking to understand a group’s or individual’s connections with place, participant observation becomes as important as analysis of the maps. It follows that workshops should be held in the participants’ own environment.

Developing the workshops

In September 2015 we piloted the “Mapping the City” project during a charrette week in the Art Department of the Newcastle Royal Grammar School (an academically-selective, fee-paying school near the city centre). A number of different exercises were trialled with pupils across the age range. These were organised over five thematic days corresponding to: the history of maps; the power and politics of maps; soundscapes; psychogeography; and personal geographies. The mappings produced over this week ranged from bamboo ‘stick maps’, inspired by Polynesian fishermen’s maps of currents and islands - made of reeds and shells each is unique and beautiful but comprehensible only to the fisherman who made it - to electronic sound recordings of the structure and spaces of the school. From the pilot, a number of core exercises emerged as being applicable to different contexts, although these continued to mutate and develop during the project:

Using, variously, orthographic, transverse Mercator projection maps, or a publically-available infographic map³, the participants were asked to use (imitation) gold leaf or metallic Sharpie marker pens to highlight the places that were important to them and then to redact places that were unimportant or that they didn’t like (either with a different marker pen or by physically cutting it out of the map). Paradoxically, the gold leaf both draws attention to the participant’s important place but also hides it. An accidental comparison between these little maps, augmented by gold leaf, and religious icons was made explicit when the redacted maps were exhibited at the Holy Biscuit gallery, housed in a former Methodist church. The redacted and perforated

maps create each individual’s ground-figure plan of the city. Collectively they begin to define territories of urban attractors and repulsions for the young people.

On a blank sheet of A3 cartridge paper, we asked participants to draw “My World”. For many this was interpreted as their journey to school and to regular sport, leisure and social activities, as well as friends’ and family members’ houses. In the pilot project, the journeys were drawn on acetate, rather than paper, over an orthographic map. The mappings made on cartridge paper, without tracing, tend to have a richer iconography. Journeys to school reveal labyrinthine connections of friends, extended families, gathering places (like convenience stores) and streets which are instinctively avoided. We also asked some participants to draw their schools. Drawings of schools documented oral history and folk law, spatial ownership and spatial grievances.



Fig. 2 “Personal Geographies” workshop at Newcastle Royal Grammar School (author’s photograph. Consent received from the school and the participants for use of the photograph in relation to this project.)

Methodology

The workshops generated a diverse, extensive and rich body of mappings. To analyse them

we followed the method described by Liz Taylor (2009) and Tine Béneker et al. (2010: p. 128) in adapting the work of anthropologists John Collier Jr. and Malcolm Collier⁶ from their photo-essay and elicitation projects. The approach starts by taking an overview of the full set of drawings. We noted our general impressions identifying themes, before proceeding to analyse each individual image.

Four themes stood out to us, which provided the broad categories for classification and analysis⁷. They were **#1. Education**; unsurprisingly, since most of the workshops had occurred in a school setting and school is the context for so much of the participants' weeks; **#2. Fantasy**; which we defined broadly as the digital world intermingling with the physical and also the interchangeability of logos and physical locations; **#3. Friends & Family**; it is a consistent feature of all of the mapping exercises we have undertaken with different groups of young people over the preceding eight years that their mappings often are populated with friends and enemies – usually identifiable by nicknames or characteristic clothing⁸. The mappings generated by these workshops were no different, with family members (especially 'nanas', 'grandmas and grandads') and pets (as well as some other, less domestic, animals) also represented. This was anticipated of the "Mappa Mundi" portraits, but was also a prominent feature in both "My World" and "Journey" mappings; **#4. Journeys**; children often have little agency in the choice of journeys which they make with parents and guardians, whether to the supermarket, a family holiday or even international migration, so these can be perceived as the adults' journeys and the child's experiences are secondary or overlooked. The workshops, with young people aged between 10 and 18, are a record of increasing independence and their expanding territory away from the family and home. This acknowledges the importance of journeys which young people make, at whatever scale, which can often otherwise be hidden.

Following the initial overview, we collected all of the mappings which showed instances of the four themes identified. In the following sections, we develop these themes in greater detail and make observations and comparisons across the workshops.

#1. Education

Initiation, folklore and secret knowledge

Berwick upon Tweed is the northernmost town in England, located three miles from the Scottish border and sixty miles along the A1 to the north of Newcastle upon Tyne. The town occupies both sides of the steep banks of the River Tweed linked by two road bridges and one rail bridge. Berwick Academy is a collection of two and three storey schools buildings, dating back to the 1950s, terraced on its sloping site. The carpark and main entrance are at the lowest point and the playing field at the top of the site. Over the course of one day, we held workshops with geography students in years 10 (aged 14-15), 12 (aged 16-17) and 13 (aged 17-18). We provided orthographic maps of the school and the surrounding area which the students annotated. Particular classrooms where they sat their favourite or least favourite subjects or spent lunchtime were highlighted; the Astroturf field, not indicated on the maps we had provided, was added to every one; and the notorious 'back yard' fire assembly point, labelled the "year 8 graveyard" by one year 13 participant, attracted commentary from a majority of participants.

Some year 10s spent their breaks in the "back yard" but for others it was regarded a no-go zone to be avoided. The "hard kids" use the canteen which is a "bad place" and where the food, including "shan⁹ paninis", should be avoided at all costs. However, for one year 10 participant at least, the canteen was their favourite place. Their mapping annotates the 'back yard' with "milkshaking, fights and gossip" and warns of "the slide game: you'll be ambushed". The year 13 maps also showed "milkshaking"; where the topography of the site creates a narrow pass and, like a parody of the Battle of Thermopylae, cartons of milkshake are rained down on the unsuspecting and unfortunate on their first or last day of term. As the self-appointed keepers of the school's alternative traditions, the year 13 maps also documented the graffiti 'tags' of the otherwise long-forgotten "Berwick Sken (sic) Crew".

Authority, rules and transgression

The Newcastle Royal Grammar School comprises of three, two-storey, linear blocks arranged around sports playing fields. The

oldest of the blocks, where the art department currently is located, also houses an assembly hall with parquet floor, wooden pews, pipe organ and first floor balcony-corridor. The most recently completed block contains the school's indoors sports facilities including a swimming pool. The junior school is in the third block facing the sports building across the playing field and also houses the dining hall. The geometry of the site – three linear blocks arranged around rectangular sports fields – and those repeating nodes¹⁰ within the three blocks – assembly hall, swimming pool and dining hall – plus, less frequently, the theatre (“whose name keeps changing”) and art rooms (or “the creative staircase”) comprise the topology of the participants' school maps.

Physically at the centre of the school's site, the sports playing field is “too precious to touch”. While it is ironically labelled “just a field” on one map, consistently it is cross-hatched, inscribed with floating alpha-numeric serif runes, and encircled by warnings “do not enter” and “keep off”. Flows of movement and figures are shown around its perimeter but are never shown trespassing on the “sacred field”. While not so forceful as the prohibition on the sports field, some mappings also exclaim “walk on the left” and “tuck your shirt in”. “Life lessons” or “uninspiring inspiring story” (like “the story of how the biro was invented” and, presumably, a teacher's catch-phrase, “100% not A*”) resound in the assembly hall under the motto “Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria Mori”¹¹.

#2. Fantasy

Representations of digital vs physical world

The young people's mappings are often populated with fantastical creatures. Not the dog-headed tribes and sea monsters of previous centuries, although unicorns have survived into the 21st century imagination, but contemporary creatures that largely have crossed-over from the worlds of online gaming, animation and movies and can embody quite mundane fears like Godzilla's “acid breath”. How young people understand and interact with the world is influenced by games like Minecraft and by the ubiquitous camera-phone constantly connected to imagery via 4G mobile networks. Social media even influences spoken language with one pupil at Walker Technology College prefixing a

statement made to his teacher with the word “hashtag” for emphasis.

“Where does Facebook live?” was first asked of us by another of the participants at Walker Technology College, but became a key question for us to ask in subsequent workshops. This question provokes a wider discussion about the relationship between the digital and physical worlds and how the young people interacted with and through social media and the internet.

Devices and interfaces

The virtual and physical worlds increasingly overlap, both geographically, with geo-locational games like Pokémon Go, and physically, in relation to the body and interface devices. For example, console games, ‘apps’ and the internet were often depicted as having a haptic rather than a cognitive relationship to the body. Although the paper space around the outline of the “Mappa Mundi” figures was not extensively drawn on, mental health worries featured as a cloud of tendrils stretching out from brains and the virtual world was depicted extending from fingers in the mappings at Benfield School.

Identity and consumption

On the “My World” maps produced at Walker Technology College, logos, including social media ‘apps’: Messenger; Facebook; Instagram; Snapchat; and Twitter; as well as YouTube, appear as parts of physical routes, or else are associated with physical locations such as fast food outlets, MacDonald's and KFC, the supermarket Asda and local convenience stores, Premier and Whites. “Town” (meaning Newcastle City Centre) is often depicted *just* as the Eldon Square Shopping Centre, clothing outlets including Jack Wills and Hollister are listed and sports brands, Nike and Adidas, are identified as if geographical destinations.

#3. Friends and Family

Important people

Many maps include representations of the homes of friends and family members (particularly extended family members, “nanas”, “grandmas and grandads”). Home and family typically were placed at the heart of the “Mappa Mundi” portraits. School and money

were nearly always related to the head, although aspirational future careers and lifestyle signifiers such as cars were not related to money and the head, but with distance at the extremities of the limbs, especially legs.

Important places

Participants' mappings showed other places which were important to them. For both the participants at Walker Technology College and Benfield School, Walkergate, in adjacent areas of early-20th Century, inner suburbs to the east of Newcastle city centre, those important places included; the MetroCentre – a large shopping mall at the west end of the Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead accessible by bus, train and car from the A1; and St. James' Park – the city centre football stadium which is the home of Newcastle United Football Club (NUFC). For pupils at Walker Technology College, Walker Activity Dome¹² was the most significant local landmark for navigation and identification with place.

The cemetery in Heaton, around 2.5 miles from Walker Technology College, was highlighted on four of the annotated orthographic maps during a single workshop with a class of 27 pupils. One story was poignantly elaborated upon by a "My World" map with a row of headstones inscribed "RIP uncle, RIP daddy, RIP grandad, RIP uncle". Other participants, who had also lost their fathers, described their visits to the cemetery were a regular part of their family's routine outings.

Another specific, but more geographically remote, landmark¹⁰ of significance to the participants in both Walker and Benfield schools was an area of open moor to the north of the city centre known as Exhibition Park. This was initially confusing to us until we remembered this was the site of 'The Hoppings', Europe's largest travelling fairground, which has been held on the site in the last week of June for the last 135 years.

Current affairs

Many of the participants were aware of, and took an interest in, current affairs. With the US election taking place towards the end of the period of our project, and coinciding with the workshops with years 6 and 7 pupils (aged 11-13) at Benfield School, the name of

Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, featured on a number of the "Mappa Mundi" portraits. When questioned about his inclusion on their mappings, the participants described him in terms of a figure of ridicule, primarily for his physical appearance, drawing comparisons between his inflammatory campaign statements about non-US nationals or minority racial groups in the US and Trump's own "orange" complexion and frequent denials that he wears a wig. "Donald Trump" was either inscribed in ironic 'love hearts' placed on stomachs [perhaps representing belly laughs? or a reference to much-reproduced newspaper photographs of topless NUFC fans with the club's logo tattooed on their distended beer bellies?] or stomped underfoot.

#4. Journeys

Migration

Space2 was created by NE1, the Newcastle Business Improvement District company, and is run by the YMCA. It provides support to 13-18 year olds to find employment through coaching, practical experience and developing contacts, as well as providing a social space after school with pool tables and loud music. At the time of the workshop, Space2 occupied a former bank in the ground floor of an office building which formed part of Newcastle's thriving, grassroots arts community that had taken over a city block on "meanwhile leases" for artists' studio and exhibition spaces. The demographic of Space2's clients is unrepresentative of young people in Newcastle as a whole, comprising mainly of émigrés and the children of naturalised immigrants. However it is through this shared experience that they identified with each other at Space2, overcoming any particular ethnicity or cultural background. Unlike other 'Mapping the City' workshops, the Space2 mappings show connections to family on a global scale and are visually redolent of the maps of flight paths in airline's in-flight magazines (fig. 3).

At Benfield School, one group "Mappa Mundi" listed the three participants' countries of origin – Iran, Portugal and Pakistan – alongside "my sister" in Italy, and visits to New York, Paris, Casablanca in Morocco and, less specifically, to Spain and India.

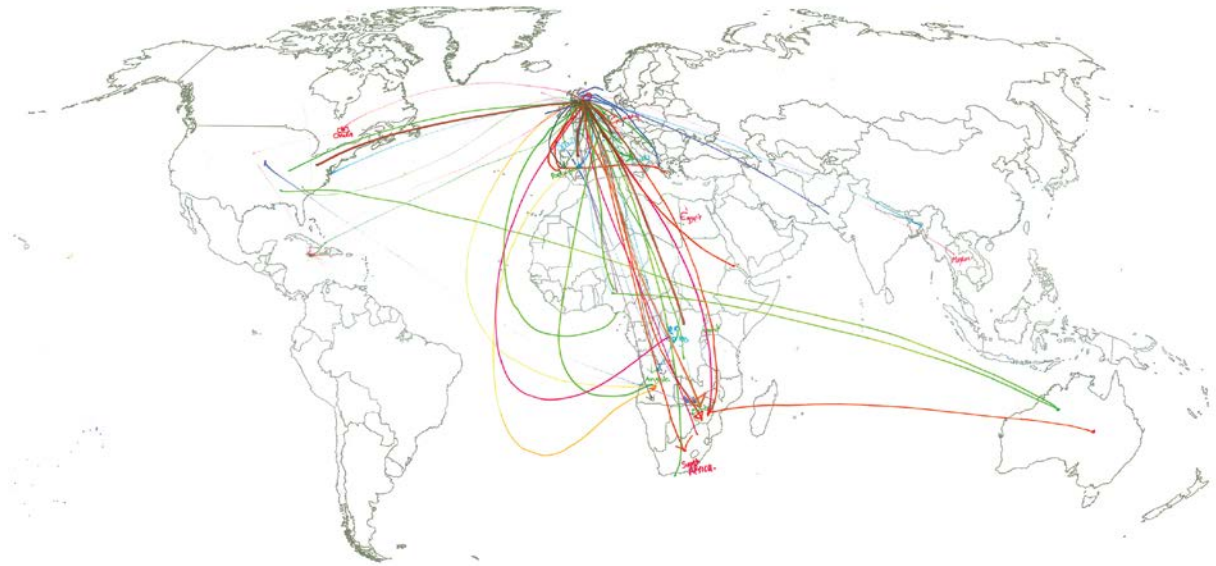


Fig. 3 “World Map” Space2 workshop with Michael Jeffries

Future aspirations

The past and future stretched out along the legs of the “Mappa Mundi” portrait mappings. For both the future medics and the future tattoo artists at Benfield School, leaving school and going to university, “a good job”, a “nice car and lush girlfriend” seemed common aspirations, but were much more remote and abstract to 11 year olds than a foreign holiday reached by aeroplane, or visiting family in a geographically much more remote part of the world. New York was the only foreign city, as opposed to a country, to appear on more than one map (featuring on five out of ten of the “Mappa Mundi” group portraits).

Significance

We are aware that drawing straight-forward generalisations from the data is intellectually problematic. We have deliberately chosen instead to elaborate our themes using specific examples, referenced to particular locations/schools and to the participants’/cohorts’ ages, with which to illustrate the commonalities across the data. While this ‘sampling’ approach is consistent with the presentation of similar research, it could be seen as merely transcribing anecdotally interesting aspects of

the mappings. Tentatively therefore, we would offer two summative observations at this point:

Although workshops were held with participants from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, the aspirations, knowledge, concerns and worries were remarkably similar across these groups. Anecdotally, age was a greater factor in defining their experiences, interests and attitudes, rather than their geographical location, comparative wealth or ‘cultural capital’.

As revealed by their mappings, the ‘versions’ of the participants’ schools are unlikely [we would speculate] to be the mental images which the adults in those institutions might wish to imagine, but they are redolent of my own memories of school. Specifically, they demonstrate the micro-geographies of power and the strong identification of social belonging with the physical occupation of space. In the binary definitions of Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), authority is “strategically” asserted, abstractly and arbitrarily by the school rules, over and through spaces, but it is “tactically” subverted ‘on the ground’ by the students themselves and through alliances with sympathetic teachers.

In the following section, the paper considers some possible implications of the material generated in this research and the uses of mapping in relation to architectural pedagogy and practice.

Reflections on participatory mapping in architectural pedagogy and practice

As previously outlined, the ‘Mapping the City’ Project derives in part from contemporary discourses in geography, critiquing the ontology of the map and capturing the processual performance of mapping and the collective, discursive construction of place. While analysis of the mappings created during the project is inherently of interest to anyone who wishes to understand (some) young people’s identification with their schools, neighbourhoods and city – as they currently exist – this will only take us so far toward the overall aim of producing a ‘Manifesto for the City’ by and for the young people. The challenge for the next phase of this project is to shift from identifying the known to identifying the unknown, the academic to the propositional. To start to consider how young people can be facilitated to identify and propose what they do not yet have, this paper will now reflect on how some architectural students undertake the transition from investigating known conditions to testing speculative and hypothetical propositions.

From “problem setting” to “problem solving”

My Master of Architecture dissertation tutorial group nominally have an interest in contemporary arts practice but, increasingly, either investigate the application to architecture of various forms of participatory and action research, or else employ aspects of those methods and content analysis techniques to different groups, social conditions and geographical areas. As an example of each approach, Tom Hewitt (MArch 2017) created a geo-located audio archive¹³ with long-term residents of the Bensham and Saltwell areas of Gateshead. Subsequently he adapted the “walking-talking” research method to facilitate a “deep reading” of the site of his design thesis, developing a critique of, and proposing an alternative to, the Local Authority’s *Local Plan* proposals for the development of this area. Taylor Grindley (MArch 2017) investigated spatial privatisation and pseudo-

public space for his dissertation using Old Eldon Square in Newcastle City Centre as a case study. His satirical design thesis proposed infiltrating the duct work and plant servicing the newly refurbished foodcourt, tactically subverting the rooftop with a labyrinth evoking both a historic event on the site and individuals’ childhood memories as a critique of the prevailing monoculture of consumption. Both Tom and Taylor used mapping techniques as part of the research methods for their dissertations and that research influenced aspects of their design theses.

Echoes of Bensham

For his dissertation, Tom primarily was interested in walking (and “walking-talking” interviews) as a research method for soliciting a sense of place with which to *inform* architectural interventions. He notes “the *propositional* eye of the architectural practitioner is the *critical addition* to... [the] research.” (p. 5) [emphasis added]. He first used a number of different mapping exercises to learn about the area prior to walking it, to build trust with the local community and to recruit new research participants through word-of-mouth. However, he observed some limitations to the mapping techniques with one group of elderly participants who insisted they “‘could not draw’ (well, rather than physically)” (p. 11) and, when engaging with a group who meet regularly, noted there “can be a greater degree of hostility to participation if [the exercises were] not discussed *in person* a session beforehand.” (p. 11) [original emphasis]. Ultimately the process of mapping acts as a prompt to articulation of oral histories and place associations, so Tom concluded that “walking-talking” interviews had an advantage in facilitating the researcher/ architect to enter vicariously into the research participant’s sense of place(s): understanding demolished reference points, former building uses and local toponyms. However, “walking-talking” interviews are time-consuming and may exclude those participants with the longest experience of a place if they are unable to walk for prolonged periods (p. 19), so mapping enabled him to capture these narratives. Tom was careful to consider and record his own, a priori assumptions and the limitations of his research as an ‘outsider’. Julia Aoki and Ayaka Yoshimizu (2015 p. 276) suggest ethnographers become “co-implicated in place-making” with the research participants,

but ethnographers also bring their own subjective, personal and “institutional entanglements” and experience which distances the researcher from being fully “emplaced”, separating them from the “sensuous” experience.

In Old Eldon Square

Participatory research was only one aspect of Taylor’s dissertation and its influence on his design thesis was more tangential than Tom’s research into methodology. Taylor’s thesis drew on his historical research, which had identified how the history of the site mirrored the waxing and waning within wider society of public and private, social and commercial development. His dissertation sought to draw attention to the means by which the most recent redevelopment used both overt and covert measures, identified by the mappings produced in Old Eldon Square, to exclude certain groups of people.

Eldon Square was originally intended to be a private, gated garden, on the model of Bloomsbury in London, for a development of Palladian-style Georgian townhouses built on three sides by developer Richard Grainger in 1825. The development of the fourth side of the square, Blakett Street, was piecemeal and comprised of civic and commercial buildings rather than residences. By the end of the 19th Century, the gardens had been adopted by the City Council and made “unconditionally” open to the public (p. 19). In 1923 a memorial to World War I was erected there and remains the focus of the annual Remembrance Sunday service commemorating Armistice Day. From the late 1960s Eldon Square became a gathering point for groups of young people for free concerts and a somewhat dangerous-looking (to contemporary eyes!) creative play area for children in the summer. In 1970, demolition began of two sides of Grainger’s development, as well as the buildings along Blakett Street, to be replaced by the inward-looking and rhizome-like Eldon Square Shopping Centre which opened in 1976. While a petition saved the war memorial, the council’s plan for the square as a “Trafalgar Square of the North”, with concerts on the terraces, never materialised. A commercial recreation centre within the shopping centre opened in 1978 to try to dissuade young people from gathering in Old Eldon Square but, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the

independent shops located in the remaining Georgian townhouses attracted young people to the area nicknamed “Hippy Green” and, more recently, “Goth Green”. Redevelopment of the shopping centre since 2005, creating new, street level frontages to the square for chain restaurants and cafe franchises initially led to conflicts with commercial tenants who, having obtained licenses from the Council permitting them to place street furniture on the square, cordoned-off areas of public space for the exclusive use of their customers. The shopping centre’s security staff are often called upon by these tenants to act as ‘first responders’ to incidents ahead of police or ambulance services and also are permitted to serve on-the-spot fines of £100 for infringements of the conditions of the council’s 2016 Public Space Protection Order prohibiting rowdy behaviour and the consumption of intoxicating substances in the square.

For successive generations of young people, the square has been an important ‘third place’ – a social space which is neither home nor a place of work or school – in which “to be our selves (sic)” and is fondly remembered by those who frequented it in the 1990s as a place of “black leather; a place to hang about, whilst *not getting in anyone’s way*.” [emphasis added]. The present teen population have a more ambiguous relationship, “We get moved on all of the time. From one corner to another. It’s pointless, but I guess then we are out of sight.” (p. 55).

The relocation of the family-friendly, free “Cinema on the Green”, from its previous location around the corner at Grey’s Monument to the front of the last remaining terrace of Grainger’s townhouses in Old Eldon Square, superficially presents the appearance of a return of the inclusive and non-commercial Newcastle Festivals of the early 1970s. However, this is not a community project but staged by NE1, the Business Improvement District (BID) company. Funded by a compulsory levy on businesses, BIDs are usually non-profit making companies, who invest in delivering additional services in the public realm to benefit businesses. The young people, pushed to the margins of the square by the redevelopment of the Shopping Centre, kept circulating around the square by security to prevent them congregating, finally are

pushed out of sight with the colonisation of their ‘third place’ by sponsored deckchairs.

These two examples start to hint at how participatory practices may be used to create more inclusive narratives and inspire empathetic design solutions, uninhibited by that research¹⁴. However, in asserting this, I am also conscious that well-meaning, participatory research can be just as easily used to facilitate the supercharged commercial redevelopment of our city centres - against the interests of the people the research is intended to represent - as any cynical, lip-service ‘public consultations’. There are now numerous documented examples of community-based projects and artists, engaged by funding organisations to work in ‘hard to reach’ communities (i.e. those with little economic power or political representation) being instrumentalised in the contested process described as “gentrification”. To opponents, this process amounts to “social cleansing”, inevitably leading to the displacement of those communities who do not benefit from the investment and redevelopment¹⁵ as Taylor’s research has documented in Old Eldon Square.

Next steps

The objective for the next phase of the “Mapping the City” project is to develop a suite of co-designing tactics with which to engage young people critically in urban design and the planning process. While Taylor and Tom have had several years of specialist education developing their architectural-thinking¹⁶ and ‘propositional eye’, can we now abstract what have they learnt to do and make this explicit and available to any young person to influence their built environment?

We are seeking funding to launch similar, “Mapping the City” projects in urban centres across the ‘Northern Powerhouse’ region, both to celebrate the young people’s sense of place and to identify their needs that are not being met currently. Through these projects, the intention is to empower young people to influence policies and decisions about the environments that will impact on them now and into the future. By facilitating young people to propose positive, tangible and inclusive solutions, this should help them secure their rights to the city(s) where they live.

Conclusions

This paper documents the first phase of the ‘Mapping the City’ project. In the paper we outline our theoretical framework elicited from recent developments in processual or ‘post-representational’ cartography and highlight the performative nature of mapping. In order to understand how place and territory is created by the practice of mapping it is important to capture the intertextual and discursive production process. Development of the exercises undertaken by participants in the ‘Mapping the City’ workshops are then described. A methodology for analysing the resultant drawings was derived from the work of photographer and anthropologist, John Collier, and applied; initially all of the mappings were considered holistically to identify a common thematic framework. Four themes were identified - education; fantasy; friends and family; and journeys. The mappings were then considered individually, by workshop and by exercise, one at a time, and the four themes were elaborated upon, observations documented and tentative conclusions drawn.

The paper also describes how participatory research techniques have informed my own architectural pedagogy and the practices of some of the students I have tutored. When working with existing communities, I propose such techniques could enable architects to gain richer insights leading to more empathetic design solutions. However, this paper also cautions that attempts by community-based artists at engagement with similarly disenfranchised communities have, inadvertently, sometimes produced negative consequences for both artist and community.

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Notes

¹ <https://accidental-youthclub.wordpress.com/>

² Harley, 1989

³ Throughout the “Mapping the City” project we have repeatedly used, abused, and physically and digitally manipulated the NewcastleGateshead “Walk” map:

[https://www.newcastle-gateshead.com/dbimings/Walk%20Map%20April%202015\(2\).pdf](https://www.newcastle-gateshead.com/dbimings/Walk%20Map%20April%202015(2).pdf).

One ‘Team Juice’ volunteer, assisting at the Newcastle City Library workshops, added to the Walk map “places for Batman”; thus implying the third dimension of the city, not shown on the map, by identifying locations of tall buildings. By overlaying the iconography of a fictional narrative, the Team Juice volunteer also showed his knowledge and ‘reading’ of the city unrelated to the vehicular and pedestrian connections the map depicts.

⁴ We were also invited to undertake workshops by the Geography Department at Berwick Academy as well as in schools located in Newcastle upon Tyne.

⁵

<http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/collection/artists/perry-grayson-1960/object/map-of-nowhere-perry-2008-p8194>

⁶ In John Collier Jr. and Malcolm Collier (1986) *Visual anthropology: photography as a research method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. (pp. 178-179) John Collier proposes a four-stage ‘basic model for analysis’:

First stage: observe the data as a whole, noting the impressions and all questions brought to mind;

Second stage: inventory the evidence for its general content, structure the inventory and the context and categories of the research goals;

Third stage: analysis of the evidence with reference to the specific questions and detailed descriptions for comparison;

Fourth stage: return to the complete data set and review for significance of the details to re-establish the full context.

In *Visual Anthropology*, Collier records that he was unable to write his findings after the third stage. The amount of detail collected from the images overwhelmed him and he was unable to identify a hierarchy of significance in his observations. He proposed the fourth stage was necessary to reacquaint himself with his initial reactions prior to writing up. This stage was not replicated in the method described by Béneker, Sanders, Tani and

Taylor (2010) which, I believe, is a consequence of their contrasting approach to the Second Stage.

Whereas Collier creates many detailed categories, Béneker et al. (2010) identified only three broad themes; “(1) depiction of social issues, such as crime, violence or terrorism and drug or alcohol abuse; (2) environmental issues, such as vehicle and factory pollution; and (3) depictions of open/green spaces such as parks, forests and children’s play areas.” (p. 128). Rickie Sanders, the American research partner for “Picturing the City” (2010), also identified a fourth category in the participants from American schools of “specific characteristics ascribed to people who live in the city.” This category was not noted in the drawings of cities from the schools in the three other countries.

⁷ The four themes subsequently also formed the conceptual framework for the “Mapping the City II” exhibition at Newcastle City Library during the Juice Festival 2016, which presented the findings of our research in public.

⁸ Curiously, this is in marked contrast to the Béneker et al.’s observations in “Picturing the City” (2010), where the young people’s depictions of abstract ‘city-ness’ included tall buildings and cars, but few people. We intend to consider this contrast between the depiction of the abstract and the lived experience of the city in a subsequent stage of the manifesto project with Juice.

⁹ Slang meaning either unfair or, in this instance, rubbish.

¹⁰ Kevin Lynch’s seminal 1960 book “The Image of the City” proposes five basic elements that make the building blocks of everyone’s mental maps: **paths**, arrange space and the movement between spaces; **edges**, are boundaries, which can be real (such as walls) or perceived; **districts**, are two-dimensional zones, with common characteristics, that can be entered; **nodes**, are areas that can be entered and serve as a foci for the city, neighbourhood or district and offer multiple perspectives of other elements; **landmarks**, are points of reference for navigation, but which are not typically entered.

Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1960)

¹¹ Trans. “it is sweet and honourable to die for one’s country”.

¹² Formerly known as the Lightfoot Centre, the Walker Activity Dome is a sports centre originally designed by local architectural practice, Faulkner Browns, with a timber frame and translucent, polycarbonate cladding, now replaced. It was the largest dome in Europe at the time of construction.

¹³ the soundmap is available on Android and iOS via <https://echoes.xyz/>

¹⁴ This sentiment echoes Gaver et al.'s (2004) article in *interactions* magazine, concerning their use of 'Cultural Probes', which has been influential on my thinking tactically about research through design.

"The probes were part of a strategy of pursuing experimental design in a responsive way. They address a common dilemma in developing projects for unfamiliar groups. Understanding the local cultures was necessary so that our designs wouldn't seem irrelevant or arrogant, but we didn't want the groups to constrain our designs unduly by focusing on needs or desires they already understood. We wanted to lead a discussion with the groups toward unexpected ideas, but we didn't want to dominate it." (p53).

William W. Gaver, Andrew Boucher, Sarah Pennington and Brendan Walker, 'Cultural Probes and the Value of Uncertainty', *interactions*, September + October (2004), 53-56

¹⁵ For example, the protests against Bow Street Arts' Live/Work scheme for aiding developer, Harca Poplar, to decant social tenants allowing redevelopment of Balfron Tower as 100% privately-owned apartments. See:

<https://50percentbalfron.tumblr.com/post/150442398164/the-fall-of-goldfingers-brutalist-balfron-tower>.

¹⁶ Using Kolb's theoretical "Learning Styles Index", Richard Tucker proposes architecture students acquire a consistent approach to solving design problems through their education. See:

<http://sydney.edu.au/architecture/documents/publications/ASR/Southern%20Drift.pdf>

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