

New Cityscapes Redesigning Urban Cartographies Through Creative Practices and Critical Pedagogies in London

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This chapter engages in a critical analysis of urban inequalities as they are experienced at the juncture of the local and the global. I do so by discussing a collaborative project based in London, called Sonic Futures, that resulted from cooperation between the London College of Communication (LCC) and May Project Gardens, a community organization. The project was conceptualized as a way to support students in their academic endeavors by combining participatory action research¹ (Selener, 1997; Ulvik, Riese, & Roness, 2018) with hip-hop music and critical pedagogies. These theoretical aspects were coupled with gardening, a practical activity that allowed participants to reflect on several local themes within this global city, including social justice, diversity, and sustainability. As unusual as it may sound, these disparate elements worked well together, prompting participants to question social structures and the inequalities they generate, alongside considerations of well-being and community formation.

Funded by the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund at LCC, this innovative approach to understanding urban spaces and inequalities concretized in a series of five workshops that took place between October 2018 and April 2019. The activities were open to students from both LCC and London South Bank University (LSBU), another partner in this venture. The original aim of the workshops was to support student attainment, retention, and engagement in academic activities. Yet, despite the original goal to support students who might be struggling and unprepared, the students who participated were all international students from relatively privileged backgrounds. As a consequence, while maintaining a keen interest in exploring how pedagogical practices could respond to student needs, one of the questions at the heart

of the workshops shifted to reflect on the positionality of instructors and students. As we all shared some experiences of migration, this reflexivity allowed us to examine the complex urban inequalities framed by the many migratory movements visible within London. Considering the location of LCC and LSBU, we decided to concentrate primarily on the area where both universities are located: Elephant and Castle in South London, within the Borough of Southwark (see figure 9.1). The workshops made connections between past and present within this site, seeking to make sense of the ways in which resources were distributed, the means by which communities gathered, and how various urban processes that produced “new (in some cases expansive, in some restrictive) notions of membership and solidarity” (Holston & Appadurai, 1999, p. 189) within this global city.

The question of urban inequality was central to the workshops and was approached from two angles. First, the workshops bore testimony to the very structures of inequalities that underlie differentiated access to spaces and resources within the global city, seen in the inability to recruit local undergraduate students from marginalized backgrounds.² The students who did participate were all graduate students from different regions of the



Figure 9.1 The Map Shows the Location of Elephant and Castle within Greater London.
Source: Map data @ Google 2019.

world, including Sierra Leone, Mexico, and India, with varied academic backgrounds and work experiences. Second, local inequalities were addressed overtly during the workshops, including in relation to the effects of urban development and regeneration, displacement, and environmental challenges. These discussions were problematized by considering the students' personal experiences of relocation, adaptation, integration, and their "right to the city," namely the collective right to "change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire" (Harvey, 2003, p. 1). The "glocal" nature of the workshops was crafted through their specificities—the international breadth provided by the students on the one hand, and the internalization of curricula based on hip-hop pedagogies on the other. In an increasingly connected world, this dynamic was in line with broader social dynamics and held the potential to establish international connections through the centrifugal movement of the students, bringing their own experiences to London and exporting new knowledge to their home country or to future homes.

Each workshop was organized around specific themes and areas of South London, and activities were carried out in several locations: Morden, a district in the south eastern part of London which still retains a rural character, and where the community organization May Project Gardens is based; and Lamlash Gardens in Elephant and Castle, the site of the former Heygate Estate³ (now Elephant Park). Workshop foci varied from regeneration and gentrification to migration, community building, discrimination, and intersectionality. These discussions were connected to questions around sustainability and framed through concepts related to hip-hop philosophy and gardening (Hoffman, Morales-Knight & Wallach, 2007). Student participation entailed the creation of a website, writing sessions, a music recording session at the Elephant Studios at LSBU, and the update of the digital platform where the material from the workshops was digitally stored. These activities were integrated with critical reflections on the topics covered and with active participation in the organization of a final conference held at LCC in April 2019.

This chapter explores the ways in which urban place and situated inequalities

can be understood at the multiple, overlapping intersections of the global and the local. I do so through a reflective discussion of pedagogical approaches used with the Sonic Futures project, exploring the influence of global migration, urban development, and individual experience for university students in South London. I suggest that, through collaborative praxis, students, educators, and community members can take small steps toward creating the types of cities they would like to see; a kind of “radical hope” for our urban futures (Lear, 2006). I begin this chapter with an ethnographic vignette that captures the workshop’s approach to education and its relation to particular spaces of the city itself.

CRITICAL URBAN SPACES: ELEPHANT AND CASTLE IN CONTEXT

The workshop at the Lamplash Gardens in South London, located just behind the University, provides a good example of how the practical and theoretical dimensions came together during the sessions. During this walking tour, we stopped in different locations to reflect on their complex histories. We started outside the Elephant and Castle’s iconic shopping center, and ended at the Heygate Estates memorial wall (see figure 9.2).

Our first stop was in front of the shopping center, where I explained the history of the building, its historical relevance, and its current role as a pole of attraction for various communities in the area. The students were surprised to discover that the name “Elephant and Castle” came from the coat of arms of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers, which bears testimony to the practices and activities carried out in the area during the Middle Ages. The name is also celebrated through a small statue of an Elephant with a Castle—originally a howdah, a carriage located on the back of camels and used to transport people—occupying the space outside the train station, which doubles as an entrance to the shopping center. The students confessed that they had never investigated the origins and meaning of the statue, despite walking past it every day.

We then went to Lamplash Gardens where my co-moderator asked the students to identify different species of plants and insects in order to understand their role within the food chain (see figure 9.3). Experiential approaches (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) are particularly relevant when guiding students to learn about the cycles of nature, including how human beings relate to the environment and the relevance of green spaces within urban contexts. As the students were exploring their surroundings, I observed their body language. Most students had an expression of wonder on their faces, one student particularly so. Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Anika told us that she had never had the chance to be so close to nature and that this new experience gave her a deep sense of peace. To be able to observe, touch, and taste the urban environment was something new to most students. We all shared our sensations and first impressions, as well as our past experiences and understandings of nature as we all came from different countries with very different flora and fauna. Discussions around plants and planting were integrated by a spontaneous interaction with a resident who owned a plot of land in the gardens. This resident told us that the area had changed enormously over the years due to the displacement of the local communities. She pointed to some of the impacts of new, high-rise buildings constructed on the site of the former estate, as they block out direct sunlight (see figure 9.4).

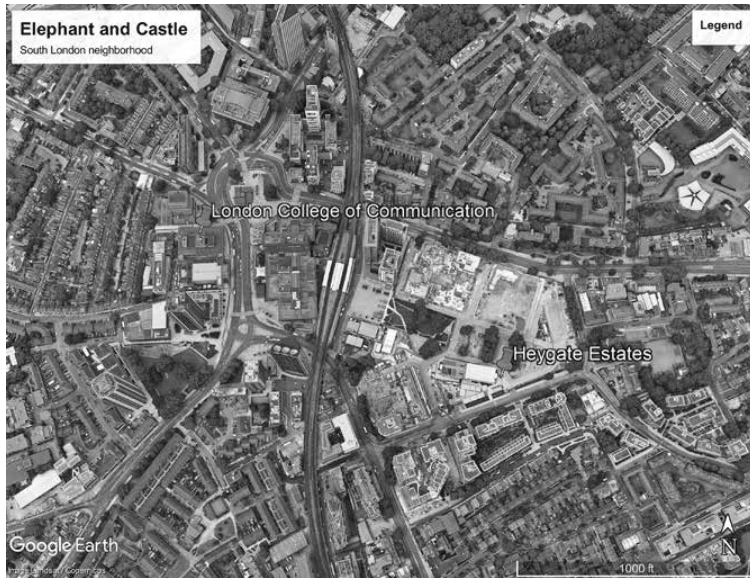


Figure 9.2 The Map of Workshop Occurred Sites. Source: Map data @ Google 2019.



Figure 9.3 Workshop Participants Explored Lamlash Gardens. Source: Photo by author.



Figure 9.4 New High-Rise Buildings Constructed on the Site of the Former Heygate Estates. Source: Photo by author.

We next moved to Elephant Park, where a commemorative wall explains the history of the Heygate Estates, an area of public housing demolished between 2011 and 2014 as part of urban redevelopment. Here, the story of hip-hop culture's birth proved to be a productive and useful example in understanding how communities are affected by urban planning processes that seem only interested in the value of economic, rather than human, capital. Chang (2005) has explored this question by narrating the role played by the Cross-Bronx Expressway in redesigning New York's cityscape after World War II. The construction of the freeway shaped the lives of those who were forced to leave their homes and relocate to areas characterized by a lack of resources and extreme poverty. This, together with other sociocultural factors, led to the origins of hip-hop. This history felt particularly impactful when standing on the site of over one thousand destroyed homes.

After a discussion on regeneration, and on access to public resources and spaces, the students shared their personal experiences and thoughts. This offered a moment in which multiple global perspectives intersected at the site of a profoundly local displacement. The urban thus becomes a set of layered locals, imbuing the city with a sense of the "glocal." These aspects are captured in student testimonies and reflections following the workshops. As Irma, a twenty-four-year-old international student from Mexico, noted:

London is such a big, complex, diverse, fast-paced city; as a foreign woman and student living here for the first time, the workshops were a big chance to understand the complexity of the city. To walk around some neighborhoods with my peers, to do gardening, to talk to local people about gentrification; was a significant and helpful chance to not feel as a loner and small tourist in a city. I can say from my experience that it helped me in emotional aspects since it was my first time in the city and I didn't have friends living in here, but the workshops were a great chance to meet wonderful people, develop communication skills and open my mind to new perspectives of what it means—London and its people. . . . Thanks to the workshops I not only understood new standpoints of issues like gentrification, gardening, growing your own food, belonging, but also, I found my own voice and my own opinion about this. The workshops were the best therapy to know myself and how I think/felt about issues that matter and that concern to me as a human, as part of a society, as a student and as a migrant in London.

LONDON'S "SCAPES": SOCIOCULTURAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The city of London and its suburban areas were the point of departure for the workshops and, at the same time, the conceptual “ground zero” for understanding the varied local dynamics generated within a global city. The global dimensions of the city reflect London’s broad character and demographics, as well as the increasing internationalization of the higher education sector. This is, in fact, a crucial element of the economic fabric of London, as a focus on recruiting international students and engaging international topics now characterize most tertiary education institutions, including LCC and LSBU.

Definitions of the city as a locus where global and local forces come together are well established across the social sciences, with the work of Saskia Sassen (2000) providing a productive framework within which to understand the possibilities of this approach to urban worlds. Sassen’s work also highlights the potential engendered by sites of memory within the city, and of sites of congregation where community organizations, or even individuals, can come together to enact alternative socio-politics. In her conceptualization of the Global City almost two decades ago, Sassen (2000) identifies the liminal space occupied by communities of immigrants—particularly relevant in London, a city in which migrants account for 36 percent of the population (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2019). Sassen argues that this “postmodern frontier zone” (2000, p. 169) is a space for alternative forms of politics. Juan Camilo Cock (2011) explored this point in the case of the 2010 presidential election in Colombia, which saw the mobilization of the Colombian diaspora in London. This call to action brought together many Colombians who were asked to vote for the Green Party’s candidate in Colombia while residing in London. During these elections, Elephant and Castle became one of the two symbolic sites for community gatherings in London. It is primarily the public (and private) sphere inhabited by migrants which holds traction for opportunities while being an easy target for discrimination and inequalities. As a local space actively utilized and experienced by Colombians during the Colombian election, Elephant and Castle became a symbol of community cohesion and political participation.

The workshops in the Sonic Futures project prioritized the potential of collaborative and critical pedagogies to address social inequalities within one area of a global city. While also highlighting the inequalities of London as a city, this chapter is interested in shedding light on the positive—on “radical hope” (Lear, 2006) that might be found in times of fragmentation, economic insecurity, and increasing global flows of goods and people. The British capital certainly encapsulates each of these pressures, rendering efforts to build community increasingly relevant and yet titanic.

Almost 9 million people live in Greater London (Greater London Authority, 2020). Elephant and Castle is an area of the South London. Fifty-four percent of the area residents are white, and significant African, Caribbean, Asian, South and Central American communities have settled here (Krausova, 2018). Another driving force behind the project was the need to understand the complex sociocultural dynamics that animate the municipality in which LCC is inserted. Elephant and Castle is indeed a “superdiverse” area, as scholar Steven Vertovec (2007) put it, with a strong Latin American presence. At the heart of the suburb sits the iconic 1965 Elephant and Castle shopping center,⁴ the first of its kind in Europe, which constitutes a meeting point and hub for the many communities of immigrants who live in the area.

The mall houses over sixty commercial activities owned or managed by small entrepreneurs, mainly from South America and Africa (Cock, 2011).

Due to its proximity to the city center, over the past twenty years this borough has attracted the interest of corporations, urban planners, and architects who have invested significant resources into its regeneration. Local workingclass communities thus face a constant threat of expulsion and displacement due to relentless urban restoration plans and the area's fast-paced gentrification. New high-rise buildings are replacing public housing—the demolished Heygate Estates being a notable example—and an affluent population of young professionals is shaping the surrounding environment through their social demands and daily economic transactions. Persistent pockets of working class and migrant communities, as well as a growing upper-middle class, coexist in this bustling borough. These two sets of stakeholders are symbolized by a road junction in the neighborhood, one that provides gateways to many different parts of London. Situated at the iconic points of both the road junction and shopping center, the LCC contributes to the demographic diversity of the area.

With almost 5,000 students, LCC is home to a highly diverse and international student population, and questions of inclusion and equality are at the core of the University's ethos. Teaching at this particular institution, I have become aware of the necessity to adapt and revise pedagogical approaches so as to ensure that learning spaces meet the needs of both students whose cultural frameworks originate outside Great Britain as well as domestic students, who also represent many different backgrounds. Recent internal statistics have shown that 37 percent of the student population at LCC is international, 48 percent is constituted by British students, and 15 percent by students from countries within the European Union (UAL, 2018/19).

The university itself has intervened in the borough's changing landscape. In 2019, LCC won a construction bid to erect a new building that will replace the old shopping center and plans to begin construction shortly. LCC's accorded plans to relocate and erect a new building where the shopping center is currently situated have exacerbated existing tensions around regeneration, thus raising questions about the role of the University in addressing inequalities. This is certainly a complex issue that cannot be unpacked by engaging in a one-sided criticism of regeneration as an absolute instrument of social displacement and discrimination. The design of the new building is in fact inspired by a communal spirit, enacted through the creation of a symbolic and physical space meant to attract and support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds by offering more functional rooms and equipment, as well as public areas dedicated to well-being. While plans call for existing shops to be relocated to an adjacent area, with the promise to keep rents low, the news of the shopping center's planned demolition has been justifiably received with some skepticism from the local community.

SONIC FUTURES: APPROACHES TO THEORY, METHODS, AND DATA

Mixed methods, based on a combination of practical, theoretical, and digital skills, were employed within the workshops to achieve a holistic comprehension of theory through practice. This experiential approach was valued in its potential to help students become more agentic in the learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The workshops also adopted an approach to music not simply as an object of study, but as research and praxis (Regelski, 2005, 2009) and incorporated hip-hop-grounded critical pedagogies (Akom, 2009), which works in tandem with participatory research. Studies on hip-hop music and culture have demonstrated the potential of hip-hop as an educational tool (Dimitriadis, 2001, 2007; Hill, 2009; Low 2001; Seidel, 2011), a foundation for fostering dialogue and a platform for social change (Rose, 1994; Chang, 2005; Malone & Martinez, 2014). Akom (2009) advocates for pedagogy that

places students at the center of knowledge production by turning their gaze toward the community, thinking of concrete solutions to everyday problems. This very crucial premise is at the basis of the workshop's ethical and epistemological values. A central component of the workshops was to examine how societal structures reproduce inequalities and exclude people who inhabit positions of disadvantage.

Within the workshops, questions of inequalities were approached by incorporating views that complicate well-established popular narratives on urban formations (cf. Butler, 2006) and that interrogate London's city "scapes."⁵ For instance, the vignette that opens this chapter—our visit to Elephant Park, the former site of the public housing Heygate Estate—elucidates this. The estate was once a space for various communities to reside and come together, and the visit spurred within workshop participants a dialogue that addressed regeneration, the future of cities, and the myriad forces that animate the global through local spaces. We discussed what constitutes community, as well as the value of redevelopment vis-à-vis social context and class. These reflections were integrated and complicated by the testimony of an Australian Indigenous scholar who joined us that day, and whose presence emphasized not only the transnational nature of the workshops, but also the many possibilities engendered by the global in its power to connect localities. The global—in this case London—as a main point of attraction and transition, intersected with not only the local knowledge of an Indigenous scholar who shared his experience in relation to Indigenous pedagogical practices and epistemologies, but also encountered the local knowledges of the participants, themselves originally from India, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Italy, Canada, and other global sites.

Another critical aspect of the theoretical and methodological frameworks was the collaborative and participatory ethos in which they were enacted. Collaboration was key to the development of the activities and for the weakening of hierarchical structures and power relations among participants—workshop coordinators included. In line with scholarship on participatory ethnographic methods (Selener, 1997; Schensul, & Berg, 2004), this case study offers as a way to rethink and revalidate research practices that aim to reduce the distance between researcher and researched (Lassiter, 2005). Within this context, collaboration comes to signify a very tangible aspect of research; namely, pedagogical praxis which may lead to concrete opportunities, when coupled with partnerships. A good example of this is given by the collaboration established with LSBU, which offered the opportunity to record a hip-hop track at the Elephant Studios. Here students collaborated with staff and with LSBU students, gaining direct experience of how a recording session is organized. Collaboration also entailed critical engagement with urban sites, enabling participants to reflect on their role not only as occupants of urban spaces, but also as creators—through the production of certain social relationships, by taking part in collective activities, and intervening in shaping spaces that reflect their ideas, experiences, and desires.

Through participatory action research (Schensul & Berg, 2004), not only did the students overcome their feeling of homesickness, being far away from their homes, families, and friends, but they also learned to critically engage with different urban configurations, thus reflecting on their positionality in relation to urban space. To feel grounded—with the double meaning of being bound to the earth and feeling a sense of stability—also enhances a sense of one's ability to achieve agency so as to address social injustices (Camarrota, 2007), change one's immediate environment, and potentially influence public decisions.

WORKSHOPS IN PRACTICE

The workshops were conceptualized to provide students who struggle with academic life with a platform to garner a sense of community in London, facilitating self-expression in a less restrictive way and exploring cogent sociocultural, political, and economic questions. They were promoted through a series of initiatives, such as marketing on digital platforms and through the university's outreach channels (bulletin boards, e-mails, social media, etc.), by word-of-mouth, and via the distribution of flyers. Yet, despite the efforts to reach as many students as possible, the number who expressed interest was low. Ultimately, four graduate students joined every session. Hence, the aims and the outcomes of the workshops had to be modified accordingly. The new challenge was to create a learning space that was stimulating, engaging, but that could also provide some practical outcomes in terms of well-being and the development of transferrable skills.

The students who took part in the activities were international students with varying degrees of expertise in the fields of journalism, media, international relations, and marketing, among others. Their previous experiences, as well as their sociocultural background, thus informed their modalities of learning and the ways in which they experienced inequalities in London. The internalization of the University is a growing phenomenon and London, as well as many other global (and less global) cities, are witnessing a surge in the number of international students who move to the capital to increase their chances of employability elsewhere (see Hewitt-Dundas & Roper, 2018). London has always constituted a pole of attraction for both career enhancement and acquisition of capital, be it economic, cultural, symbolic, or social. Hence, the pressing requests posed by a growing student body characterized by a high level of heterogeneity in terms of preparation, expectations, and understandings of education constitute a new challenge for university staff. Within this context, and taking into consideration the demands generated by highly globalized societies with their complex patterns of mobility, pedagogical practices should aim to diversify content and approaches to education, as well as promoting sustainable alliances between the university and the industry (Hanna, 1998; Hewitt-Dundas & Roper, 2018). With this in mind, the workshops aimed to strengthen such a connection through the organization of a culminating event, the "Sonic Futures Conference," where representatives from various industry sectors met the students.

The workshops took place on Saturdays and Sundays, lasting three to five hours apiece. Each workshop was taught by the author and by the founder of May Project Gardens, Ian Solomon Kawall. The connection between hip-hop culture and music, gardening, and critical theory was rendered explicit through a playlist and via the combination of theory and praxis. More context was provided through a brief lecture on the history of the area, the history of hip-hop, and the relationship between our practices and the environment. We would ask students to look around and familiarize themselves with the natural environment for that session. Gardening provided the perfect terrain to test teaching methods based on nonhierarchical structures, aiming to infuse selfempowerment and collaboration while strengthening a sense of community (cf. Hoffman, Morales-Knight, & Wallach, 2007).

The first and the last workshop took place in Morden, the official site of May Project Gardens, where Ian lives and runs his regular activities. These two workshops each represented the beginning and ends of cycles, both in metaphorical and more concrete terms: the first workshop was organized in the fall of 2018, at the end of a natural cycle, whereas the last one was scheduled in spring, when a new season of growth begins.

When the workshops began, I was particularly eager, as I had been longing for a more active connection with nature since I moved to London, often touted as the "greenest" city in Europe. Growing up in the Italian Alps, where most of my holidays were spent helping my family work the land,

I felt I could contribute to the activities in the garden using my own form of “local knowledge.” The first and last workshops were the most active, as we got a chance to get our hands dirty in Ian’s garden and greenhouse. On both occasions, the students were assigned different tasks—from raking to spreading the compost over the winter garden beds and sowing seeds—but, due to the weather conditions we were forced to spend more time inside the greenhouse and in Ian’s home.

During the last workshop we mainly worked in the greenhouse, where students learned about planting and about what to grow in different seasons. Ian showed them different seeds and asked each student to guess what they were. Subsequently, after choosing a variety of seeds, they planted them in small pots that would facilitate growth, allowing the shoots to be transplanted successfully. As the students were planting, Ian gave them basic instructions about different methods and on what to do with the seasonal vegetables they had selected. While students were busy in the garden, I encouraged them to think about the links between their courses and what they were doing, reflecting on ways to strike a good balance between their academic commitments and their personal lives. This prompted a discussion about life in London for international students and economies of sharing. At the end of the session, the students said they felt a sense of purpose and connection, as expressed by Rani, a graduate student from India, who explained:

I really enjoyed all the workshops. I learned so much at every workshop. The workshops also mainly became a space for me to self-reflect and to mentally grow in my views on my role as an international student in London—on how I can contribute to the community around me and learn from the community around me. I found that everyone in the workshops became like family, and the workshops really felt like a safe space to be myself and express my views on our course, and our journeys with Hip Hop. I also learned about certain plants and how they grow, and I particularly loved spending time in Ian’s garden and learning what permaculture truly is.

The activities in the garden were also integrated with a complete tour of the garden and lessons on permaculture that revealed its relevance as a tool for regenerative agriculture. Ian would normally take the lead in the garden, asking students to identify all forms of life and guiding them in their explorations. In the first workshop, to test the students’ knowledge, Ian pointed to a small pond, which constitutes the heart of his garden, and asked them: “do you see any living creatures in the pond? If yes, would you be able to tell me what they are?” The students’ senses were not yet trained. They looked puzzled and his queries remained unanswered for a few minutes. After a while, one student identified frog eggs and replied with excitement: “is this what you are referring to?” Ian nodded in agreement and smiled. The students were starting to open their eyes to the secret life of the garden as their confidence was growing.

Reflection and personal growth were common threads that emerge from the students’ observations and are constitutive of participatory research action (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991; Schensul & Berg, 2004). It is particularly interesting to note that it was through self-reflection that students learned to observe, analyze, and interrogate privilege, as well as those structures that hinder economic, social and personal development. When asked to explain the value of the workshops in a city like London, the same student explained: I think in a city like London, the workshops are extremely valuable in addressing issues one doesn’t even know they have. In the absence of time or spaces that allow for exploring of this kind, residents work towards productivity every day but this is somehow accompanied with growing mental and physical health struggles. Safe spaces like the one that these workshops tend to become, are so important. I joined the workshops a month after moving to London from India,

and they helped me find myself and gave me a support system in a country away from home.

Another student wrote:

[The workshops] surpassed expectations, becoming spaces where we not just engaged with nature and the world around us, but also looked inwards and got to know ourselves better. Unexpectedly, they became safe spaces for freedom and expression, and I found myself leaving each session feeling peaceful and having learnt more about myself. C. and I. structured the workshops in a way that allowed participants to spend time together exploring an area (Elephant & Castle) or spending time in a garden, and then taking time to discuss personal learnings together, leading to larger questions. Each of the workshops gave me so much food for thought; I don't think anything else could have caused this kind of enrichment.

These remarks provide a very interesting window into the experiences of the students, what they value, their needs and expectations. As international visitors, the students faced some difficulties in navigating London both geographically and socially and the workshops provided a space for them to develop a sense of self within the city, which is often imagined as a symbolic "global," rather than referring to its complexities as many "locals" to which one can learn to belong to and take part in (Harvey, 2003; Holston & Appadurai, 1996).

CONCLUSION

I conclude this chapter by returning to Lear's notion of "radical hope" (2006) to suggest that emerging community spaces could offer one feasible solution to the challenges posed by financial cuts to cultural and social initiatives. Moving within the constraints of austerity measures, and the uncertainty of a pending exit from the European Union, London is traversed by a series of contrasting forces that are creating a sense of insecurity, while also promoting forms of resistance.

To be able to navigate the city, with its intricate net of seemingly infinite possibilities, requires a map that modern GPS technologies cannot provide. It is the sensorial world of things and beings that stimulates those who "walk" (de Certeau, 1984) to not simply look for answers, but pose questions in the first place. Space here has been conceptualized as a space of places, as Castells (2005) would put it. In Castells' work, the expression bore a key meaning in relation to the daily practices which define human nature and society. Here, space of places, maintains the same core value but moves beyond this definition as it postulates the element of hope. "Radical hope" as a precondition for equality and equity, can be seen in spaces dedicated to sociality and social activities that incorporate diversity. This is precisely the work of projects such as Sonic Futures, where younger generations can become agents of social change. The workshops encouraged students to embrace a positive attitude in their relationship to the city, thus forging new alliances and alternative forms of citizenry that transcend the national to embrace the realm of the transnational and transcultural (cf. Holston & Appadurai, 1996).

A systematic and concerted effort in the redefinition of the city and its meanings is pivotal, and it can only be successful if promoted by educational institutions that work with the younger generations. Despite the challenges that I have encountered in promoting the workshops, the students who participated seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed the program as their comments and reflections demonstrate.

The creative dimension of the workshops provided the perfect terrain for speculations on urban interventions and place-making, enabling participants to learn and create knowledge, conceptualizing new possibilities for their newly found communities and for themselves. A concrete example of the

practical outcomes of the workshops is the possibility to transform the program into a project that can be used by graduate students for employment, thus shifting the leadership and enabling modes of action based on resistance and support. The students who participated in the activities will thus be the leaders of the future, taking ownership of the workshops to support younger generations of students with limited access to resources.

NOTES

1. An ethnographic approach applied to participatory action research has been carried out through data collection derived from participant observation, written interviews, and field notes. Ethnographic data lend themselves to nuanced narratives that complicate well-known questions, in particular when it comes to investigating inequalities in contemporary societies.
2. While the workshops have proven to be very positive experiences for the students, there are several challenges that need to be addressed as they raise important questions in relation to inequalities and the role of these activities in tackling questions of participation, attendance, and attainment. Indeed, students from less privileged backgrounds are unlikely to find the time to participate in the workshops, and further limitations to participation likely include transportation challenges, stigma, and socioeconomic need.
3. The Heygate Estate was a large housing complex in Elephant and Castle, South London. The demolition of the buildings was carried out from 2011 to 2014 due to a plan to regenerate the area.
4. With a concentration of ninety-six Latin American businesses, the Elephant and Castle shopping center represents one of the most important hubs for Hispanic communities in London (Cock, 2011).
5. Here, I adopt Arjun Appadurai's (1990) terminology detailing the global dimension of cultural flows as this chapter focuses on the transnational dimension of cultural phenomena and citizenship in the global city.

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