



## The Representing 'Butetown' case study

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*Whose history shall be remembered and whose forgotten? What images of social life shall be projected and which shall be marginalised? What voices shall be heard and which shall be silenced? Who is representing whom and on what basis? (Jordan and Weedon, 1995)*

### **Background**

Butetown (also known as 'Tiger Bay' and 'The Docks') is the primary focus of this case study. Our aim is to map and explore the significance and meaning of the social spaces and public places in Butetown – the community centres, pubs, churches, street corners, youth centres, high-rise blocks, fields and alleys. It is from the social activities that have taken place within these places that we hope to be able to capture notions of belonging, and to explore community representations that are of value to people living in the area and to those with strong emotional ties to Butetown.

In this case study we are also exploring the lives, perceptions and experiences of Caribbean elders. Here, the main focus is the exploration of cultural knowledge, assets and resilience that have been transmitted and remain of importance to Caribbean elders, with a focus on factors that support and enhance perceptions of health and wellbeing. As one of five case studies, Representing 'Butetown' allows for an exploration of the area and of those with ties or other connections (strong or weak, fleeting or long-lasting), with a particular focus on the experiences and views of Caribbean elders, and their descendants, loved ones and friends.

It is from these two interlinked areas of focus that we are seeking to co-produce new meaningful community representations and creative outputs, of

value both to those who produce them and as credible sources of evidence and knowledge that can underpin and impact positively on local policy for health and social care.

## **Work package 1: Capturing existing representations of community and of place**

To date, a review of a selected fiction about older Caribbean migrants living in the UK has been conducted. This review, entitled *Representations of ageing, agency and resilience in selected fiction about older Caribbean migrants living in the UK*, was conducted by a volunteer researcher interested in the case study between July 2013 and September 2014. The review offers a comparative analysis of representations of ageing, agency and resilience in mid-late 20th- and 21st-century fiction that depicts the lives of older men and women who migrated to post-war Britain from the Caribbean. The novels allow us to explore representations of life in the UK for Caribbean older migrants. In so doing, we are also able to explore representations of British society and capture fictional accounts of how dominant (negative as well as positive) views of Caribbean migrants are perceived and addressed by the characters.

For the purposes of this exploratory analysis, four novels have been examined: Joan Riley's *Waiting in the Twilight* (1987), Thelma Perkins' *Roundabouts* (2002), Caryl Phillips' *In the Falling Snow* (2009 – Kindle version) and Bernadine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013). It was not the intention to review any novels that simply include depictions of older Caribbean migrants. Instead, the works of fiction had to have the following markers:

- The central protagonist is an older person of Caribbean heritage.
- The story is told through the protagonist's eyes.
- The story revolves around the protagonist's lived experiences as they navigated their day-to-day life as a migrant in the UK in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> to early 21st century.
- The story explores notions and presentations of relationships between parent (the protagonist) and child.

Although *In the Falling Snow* does not strictly meet all these criteria, we included it because the second protagonist recounts, on his deathbed, some of

the critical incidents in his life as an immigrant. The summary of the life story of each of the protagonists includes such factors as reasons for migration, early life and settlement, work patterns, and family and social life.

This first stage has been largely deductive. The summary has been compiled and further work will take place once a research associate is in post. The summary will contribute to a more formal literary analysis, and will also provide the basis for creative interpretations (e.g., dramatic readings from the texts, and the development of composite characters).

Once the Research Associate is recruited, a scoping survey of 'official', as well as literary and film accounts depicting Butetown will be conducted. Drawing on these and other sources of material, the aim will be to draft a report exploring existing representations of Butetown and of Caribbean elders.

## **Work package 2: capturing nascent as well as subaltern narratives of place and community**

Much like the Hodge Hill case study, it is very likely that an ethnographic approach will shape this work undertaken in this work package. Over the last year, some work has been undertaken by the Co-I to help shape the work to be undertaken by the Research Associate. Of importance, a small dataset of semi structured interviews conducted with Caribbean men and women living in Cardiff in 2013 has been secured for inclusion, transcription and analysis, and a new set of interviews have been collected as part of this year's Butetown Carnival.

*All Our Stories: Writing Black and Minority Ethnic Experiences into Cardiff's History* was a project conducted by Diverse Cymru in 2013. The aim of the project was, in part, to conduct semi-structured interviews to capture the life stories of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. In total, 30 interviews were captured audio-visually by House of Le Fou Film Productions. All 30 stories were edited and placed online at <http://www.diversecymrustories.com/all-our-stories/>. The stories were further edited into a feature-length (81-minute) film; presenting some of the key

themes emerging from the interviews, this is available online at <http://www.diversecymrustories.com/the-film>.

In April 2014, permission to transcribe and analyse the unedited interviews of 11 participants who self-identify with the Caribbean – to varying extents, and by ancestry/lineage or direct links – was sought and granted by Diverse Cymru. After additional permissions were secured from the participants, and the proposed analysis approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Wales, the 11 stories have been transcribed. The aim will be to conduct a qualitative thematic analysis of interview data, with a focus on common themes that may emerge. Questions that will help in this examination include the following:

- What do the interviews reveal about growing up in the UK?
- What do the interviews reveal about belonging and notions of identity?
- What, if anything, can the interviews reveal of the health assets, forms of social capital and other resources that have allowed participants to cope with and navigate real and perceived structural barriers?
- What are some of the key community representations of and by Caribbean migrants in Wales? What community representations produced through creative arts practices are of importance to them?
- What do the life stories reveal about the participants' understanding of Welsh heritage and history, and the ways (and the extent to which) they feel they are represented?



*Video Viewbox: Butetown Carnival Remembered* was a pop-up installation created for the 2014 Butetown Carnival by our community arts partners, **Simon and Anthony Campbell (15<sup>th</sup> Floor Productions)**. The aim was to create a space for carnival goers to reflect and share their thoughts on what the Butetown Carnival means to them. Voice was considered a vital element of the

installation, and our aim was to foster a space where people could share stories, recollections and memories of importance to them. These voices represented individual and collective understandings of the role and significance of the Butetown Carnival that we felt to be meaningful and of value.

In total, 16 interviews were captured on film. The topic questions included the following:

- What does the Butetown Carnival mean to you?
- What is your most memorable recollection of carnival?
- What is your first memory of carnival/the Mardi Gras street parade in Butetown?
- What role do you think carnival plays in the community?

Ethical approval to conduct the interviews was granted in August 2014, and the interviews were conducted between 23 and 31 August. The dataset will be transcribed and analysed in the next year. As planned from the outset, the interviews will be used in the forthcoming social documentary on the history and significance of the Butetown Carnival that is being produced by 15<sup>th</sup> Floor Productions.

### **Work package 3 and 4: Co-producing community representations and developing creative outputs that can be used as credible sources of evidence and knowledge**

#### **‘A Journey so far’: Remembering the Caribbean in Butetown - Past and Present**

A launch event for this case study was held on 1 July 2014. This free event – ***A Journey So Far: Remembering the Caribbean in Butetown – Past and Present*** – was developed in collaboration with the **National Theatre Wales (NTW)**, using its Assembly model and with additional funding secured as part of the 2014 Connected Communities Festival. The aim of the event was to:

- celebrate the historical and contemporary links and emotional ties people have/have had to key places in Butetown (the churches, centres, pubs and streets)
- open up space for Caribbean migrants to reflect on the role in their lives of key places and activities in Butetown when they arrived and settled in Cardiff
- enable Caribbean migrants and their children to share the varying impact that Butetown has had on their lives over time and in changing circumstances
- give people the opportunity to share what Butetown means to them today
- explore the Assembly model as one creative, participatory approach to generating evidence about the everyday lives of communities.

The NTW's Assembly approach involves a performance-based debate that explores one or several issues important to the local community. There are usually four performances, created by members of a small creative team over an intensive four-day period in the lead-up to the event. The aim is for the audience to become fully involved, working in small groups around tables to reflect, discuss, debate and work to complete the tasks set by each member of the creative team as part of their performance.

Over 130 people attended the event, held at Portland House, Cardiff Bay. All attendees were asked to share seven words that encapsulated their thoughts on the evening, and these included: *'Great night, when's the next one?'* and *'Bloody brilliant'*. Blog entries and a summary report will follow shortly. We will continue to work with NTW.

The Assembly was developed by a small creative team; in the lead-up to the event, interviews were conducted with each member of the team, and a small-group discussion was also facilitated and filmed. The raw footage is being used to help develop a short (15-minute) film on both the Representing 'Butetown' case study (with footage collected by our arts partner, **Tara Wyllie of House of**

**Le Fou Film Productions**) and the Representing North Merthyr case study (led by Eva Elliott and Ellie Byrne, with arts partner Richard Davies of Forge Films).

Additional funding (from a separate University of South Wales fund) was used to commission further editing of this raw footage into five short films. Currently housed on Vimeo (<http://vimeo.com/houseoflefou/videos>), the films showcase members of the creative team and their roles, providing insights into the Assembly as a method of community engagement.

The short films also reveal the team members' understandings of Butetown, representation, community and belonging. Accordingly, ethical approval is being sought to transcribe the interviews and the discussion group. [Note: The use of this material in this manner was granted at the time and formalised in informed consent forms signed by each member.] Analysis of this material will take place once ethical approval has been granted.

A short film of a workshop conducted prior to the Assembly was also commissioned. The film explores the journey of engagement with the local African -Caribbean Elders Society (**ACES**). The rough cut of the short film was shown to ACES members in September and the final short film will be made available in 2015.

In October 2014, our first guest blog was published. Written by Adeola Dewis, ***Bits and Pieces: Something out of Nothing*** highlights aspects of her contribution to the Assembly. Her work looks at Caribbean identity, transformation and belonging in Wales via interpretations of masquerade and carnival performance; see <http://damelorrainemas.blogspot.co.uk>.

### **'A Journey so far' – creative life story workshops (June to December 2014)**

As part of the further development of the participatory arts element of the case study, a series of four meetings – rooted in the workshop held with ACES in June 2014 – will take place between October and December 2014, with ACES as a community research partner. This workshop series has been developed by Keith Murrell (the community arts practitioner who directed the launch event), Adeola Dewis (a visual arts practitioner, dancer and researcher who was part

of the creative team that developed the Assembly), Lynette Webbe (community health advocate) and Pauline Andam, ACES director.

The aim will be to conduct reminiscence-based workshops that allow Caribbean elders to reflect on and talk about their lives; the key circumstances that are shaping their older age in Wales; and notions of community, belonging and ageing that are of importance to them. Music, films, photographs, objects (both those presented and those brought in by participants), food, newspapers, maps, smells, songs, movement and dance will be used to re-awaken people's memories of their experiences. The life stories and novels examined in work package 1 will also be developed into interpretative material to be introduced in this series (or in future series with other local Caribbean groups and organisations).

The topics underpinning the first three workshops are those introduced at the Assembly:

- goodbye and first impressions of Cardiff, Butetown and Wales
- what you were told: sayings and proverbs from here and there
- the tracks of my life ... in song.

Other topics will be developed according to the wishes of the attendees. It is hoped that the memories triggered, the reflections and stories that may emerge, and the socio-cultural norms and individual (as well as collective) values underpinning them will allow some insight into the lives of older migrants and enable understanding of community representation. The aim is to find ways to capture what the stories, reflections, objects and music may reveal about notions of representation, belonging, place, community knowledge and wealth. The aim is that this activity is of benefit to the participants, and it is hoped that they will continue to meet after the project. Methodologically, we are exploring the processes underpinning co-productive practices.

The materials gathered will be contained in individual memory boxes. In addition, elements from each box will be brought together depicting the collective sense of representation that draws on the themes explored in the workshops. For example, a collage of items could be digitally captured and printed on cloth, which in turn could be used to wrap/adorn the participants as

they desired. They could then be photographed if they wished. The work is being captured via a blog written by Adeola Dewis: <https://ajourneysofar.wordpress.com>

## **What's next (November 2014 – October 2015)**

A research associate will be recruited to the case study in autumn 2014 to take forward the work that has been done. Priorities for the coming year include:



- completing a scoping review of existing representations of Butetown and of Caribbean elders (work package 1)
- analysing the two sets of interviews and other work necessary to complete work package 2
- designing, delivering and evaluating the participatory arts programme underpinning the co-production of new community representations (work package 3)
- developing creative (and other) outputs that can be used as credible sources of evidence (work package 4)
- raising awareness of the case-study activities (across all work packages)
- drafting blogs, articles and other written outputs for publication in 2015.

Lastly, there are a number of research and community projects taking place in Butetown, and some are producing important datasets. For example, tales and stories from Butetown residents are being collected as part of the Wales Millennium Centre's community outreach programme, with the opportunity to develop and exhibit at the Cardiff Story Museum. We aim to explore partnership and data-sharing opportunities with such projects.

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