Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values Project – written evidence (CCE0186)

Summary and recommendations

Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values (UEP) is a five-year research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council part of their Connected Communities: Cultures and Creative Economies programme. (For more information on the UEP project and response authors, see final page).

We thank the Committee for identifying the extent to which technological and social change is presenting new challenges and opportunities for the definition and practice of citizenship and civic engagement in the UK today, and for opening this inquiry.

Our response to this inquiry is based around four central recommendations:

1. We must recognise that citizenship, civic engagement, participation, and social cohesion involve collective obligations on the part of public authorities and wider society. It is essential not to individualise the responsibility to ‘integrate’ onto marginalised individuals or groups; the responsibility must be shared. We recommend guarding against this exclusionary tendency, and for ensuring all policy proposals stemming from this work are framed as state or collective actions, rather than coercively expressed individual duties.

2. To successfully foster a new sense of citizenship or civic engagement there must be shared experience between individuals, particularly children as part of their education. We recommend a substantial investment in and facilitation of initiatives that give young people the opportunity to connect with their peers and the wider civic communities of which they will ultimately become members as part of every child’s school-age education.

3. The values that will underpin a renewed concept of citizenship must be derived in conversation with the diverse groups, communities, and individuals who together constitute British society. This will require new means of investigation, and negotiation, as the voices we need to hear from the most are unlikely to be present among responses to this inquiry. We recommend a new exercise in outreach that dispenses with current methodologies and audiences, in an attempt to create a wide-ranging conversation...
about the values and commitments that underpin life in Britain’s traditionally under- and un-represented communities.

4. It is impossible to practise citizenship and civic engagement when the institutions and spaces within which civic participation can be realised are under threat or no longer exist. We use the term ‘civic infrastructure’ to describe this connected network of places, buildings, and services that enable modern citizenship to realised. We recommend that the concept of ‘civic infrastructure’ be recognised as an essential precondition for effectively practising citizenship and civic engagement, and that this recognition informs the approach of local and national governments to protecting and extending these vital spaces.
1: What does citizenship and civic engagement mean in the 21st century? Why does it matter, and how does it relate to questions of identity?

1.1 Citizenship has gained in prominence in recent years, after a long time off the political agenda. The primary drivers for this interest appear to be the post-2001 rise of immigration, integration, and community cohesion as issues of significant public concern.

1.2 We note also that ‘identity politics’ has played a role in destabilising some of the elements that formed the ‘modern’ (i.e. post-war British) conception of citizenship. While on the one hand a positive expression of freedom and choice, the trend towards individualisation that it represents and reinforces has also had negative effects on social cohesion and the potential to build shared visions of the future.

1.3 This modern model of citizenship has also been proven self-limiting, insofar as its construction has been almost exclusively legal and centred on a discourse of ‘rights’ that has failed to affirm the reciprocity of social obligations (each right we enjoy is also a responsibility to respect that right for all others) and the wider, non-legal elements of civic engagement and participation that equally constitute an individual’s membership of a political community.

1.4 The Understanding Everyday Participation project’s work has demonstrated that people still take membership of a collective seriously. We have found that positive feelings of collective, communal identity remain, that could form the basis for a renewed concept of citizenship.

1.5 Any discussion of the relationship between citizenship and identity must recognise and set out to address the ongoing stigmatisation of many groups within Britain, targeted by ethnic, cultural, and economic difference. In addition to moving beyond paying lip-service to diversity, a substantive concept of citizenship must be capable of overcoming such stigma in a positive and constructive, rather than combative, way.

1.6 National identity proves a problematic anchor for a concept of citizenship because individuals and
communities do not live or participate ‘nationally’. On these bases, we believe it makes sense to attempt to disentangle the concept of citizenship from those of identity.

1.7

Research in Glasgow by Kye Askins has recently argued that a move away from citizenship toward a concept of citizenry, equipping citizens for effective participation and interaction in an age of ‘super diversity’, is necessary. In this alternative model, the complexities of citizenship are accounted for and seen instead as a process which exceeds 'any fixed status of citizenship to be achieved in the formal political sphere'.

1.8

We must also further acknowledge the significant longitudinal variation in relationships to citizenship. When approaching the subject, we are forced to ask the question “citizenship, for whom?” and address the fact that disparities of wealth and opportunities between generations have introduced substantial variance into the experience of citizenship between age cohorts.

1.9

Finally, it must also be noted that the UK’s lack of a written constitution has played a role in the states of ambiguity and ambivalence that characterises the contemporary reception of citizenship. Serious consideration must be given to the formal codification our constitution and citizens’ rights and responsibilities.
Citizenship is partly about membership and belonging. Are there ways we could strengthen people’s identity as citizens, whether they are citizens by birth or naturalisation? Could citizenship ceremonies or events throughout the educational process play a role? Should pride in being or becoming British be encouraged?

Membership and belonging

Without clarification/definition, the uncritical use of terms like these can inhibit debate, rather than engage. Membership of, and belonging to, what?

Belonging may be problematic term: why, for example, should citizenship be thought of as a ‘belonging’, when it could alternatively be thought of primarily as a ‘commitment’ to fellow
citizens. Prioritising belonging emphasises that which the citizen *belongs to*. In a genuinely free and open society, it is surely preferable to abolish the feudal tone of ‘belonging’ and bring citizens to the centre, through the language of commitment, respect and obligation between people; rather than a relationship of belonging and loyalty to an abstract idea or concrete set of institutions, and the ownership these concepts suggest.

2.3
The language choice in this consultation question (membership, belonging) is clearly attempting to articulate a narrative of shared values that can create and sustain social bonds. We believe that this could be achieved, but only on the basis of a proper consideration of where these values are to be derived from and who will be expected to share them.

2.4
The assumptions behind this question also require consideration. The Understanding Everyday Participation project works with communities and groups that regularly practise diverse, creative, but unrecognised, acts of participation across our country. These types of participation – which pass beneath the radar of centralised authority - already build active social bonds between participants, and the sense of membership and belonging to which this question aspires.

2.5
Identifying, and formally recognising, these forms of involvement, engagement, and participation would contribute to a better understanding of the existence and possibilities for a successfully-grounded concept of citizenship in our contemporary social environment.

2.6
It is also essential to broaden our understanding of communities whilst examining the nature and possibilities attached to the sense of ‘belonging’. For example, advances in digital technology mean that non-geographic communities of interest are not only proliferating, but have already acquired greater social and political significance than the traditional understanding of communities as spatially-bounded groups of people. Here, the government must ‘move with the times’, or risk attempting to base a new concept of citizenship on an idea of community that is already, for many, functionally obsolete.

2b: strengthening citizen identity

2.7
One of the aspects driving what may be considered a crisis in the idea of citizenship is the lack of a persistent and unifying theme around which concepts of citizenship can coalesce.
A question which requires urgent consideration is whether a pride in British identity comes at the cost of something/someone else. Can British citizenship and British identity be constructed in a non-exclusive, non-oppositional way? If not, efforts to produce this identity can only succeed by deepening other divisions, which will make them ultimately self-defeating.

It is clear that individuals seek, and respond to, messages about who they are and to what community or communities they belong. To be effective, citizenship must craft a coherent set of messages that can fit together across this whole.

Rather than conceive of citizenship as a 'master-signifier’, or paramount political-social identity, a renewed concept of citizenship should base itself on becoming *primus inter pares* among a recognised and respected diversity of existing community associations.

Rather than say citizenship is more important than existing associations, it recognises all the others as valid, but in so doing, becomes the one that's greater than the sum of its parts.

The idea of 'tolerance’ is one that we believe has the potential to become a basis for an inclusive concept of citizenship.

One promising project of which we are aware is “The Linking Network”, based in Bradford. This initiative, an inter-school dialogue in which young people can experience first-hand tolerance as engagement with other communities and cultures, is a powerful example of how tolerance and engagement are essential to the forms of inter-community understanding upon which contemporary citizenship must be based.

**2c: Citizenship ceremonies**

We believe that public activities such as citizenship ceremonies can have a role to play in consolidating citizenship as a collective identity and experience. In order to do so, however, they cannot be exclusively targeted at specific groups.

In addition to new arrivals, the same process (with the same education, the same expectations, and the same level of assessment) should be extended to all children reaching the age of majority,
without exception. Ultimately, every member of our political community should be able to locate their passage into citizenship as a positive and shared experience, held in common with their fellow citizens.

3: Civic engagement can be seen as both a responsibility and a right of citizenship. Beyond the existing legal framework, should citizens have additional formal rights and responsibilities? How do you see the relationship between the two? Should they have the force of law individually or be presented as reciprocal duties between citizen and state? How should they be monitored and/or enforced?

3.1 The question of additional formal rights and responsibilities can only reasonably be considered in the context of the specific rights and responsibilities that may be extended. Does, for example, the right to earn a ‘living wage’ feature in this list, or its correlative duty in the form of a responsibility to pay a living wage to any citizen an individual chooses to employ?

3.2 Ultimately, this question is also vexed by the absence of a codified Bill of Rights, which, as part of a written constitution, would be able to categorically identify which rights and responsibilities are attached to citizenship and protected by (and from) the state.

3.3 It cannot escape notice that this question is framed in a coercive way. A common weakness in the modern approach to citizenship which is more often framed by sanctions and force of law in the breach than by any positive benefits in the observance. An approach concerned less with observation, enforcement and punishment, and more with incentivisation, positive reinforcement, and genuine co-operation is the only one capable of the task.

3.4 One danger of writing up a new series of rights and responsibilities is that they are written by the same particular groups that have dominated the citizenship and civic engagement discussions of the past. It is essential that we find a way to bring voices into this discussion that have previously been excluded, so that the rights and responsibilities that emerge reflect the broadest possible understandings of what these could be.

3.5 Citizenship and civic engagement should, of course, form a part of all education – from primary to higher education, and including vocational education.
3.6
In Higher Education, fee reduction/waiver opportunities should be considered to incentivise participation in civic engagement activities, which could take the form of placements amounting to one extra year of undergraduate degree study.

3.7
However, in order for any activities to succeed, it is essential that they are not based around the ‘employability’ and other market-centric values. Citizenship cannot and must not be reduce people to their economic role/utility – so citizenship and civic engagement activities must avoid the usual voluntarism and CV-enhancement activities that have, so far, passed for acceptable forms of government-led citizen engagement.
4: Do current laws encourage active political engagement? What are your views on changes to the franchise for national or local elections, including lowering the voting age? Should changes be made to the voting process or the voting registration process?

4.1
We believe that widening the franchise to include 16 and 17 year olds would encourage political engagement and civic awareness.

4.2
In terms of local and national elections, we further believe that moving election days to weekends rather than a working day would offer a significant improvement in the rates of political participation across every cohort of the working-age electorate.

4.3
We are concerned at the disappearance from the electoral register of significant number of citizens in the transition to Individual Electoral Registration. We believe that the current progress of US states towards automatic voter enrolment should be considered as a possible alternative to the UK’s current electoral registration mechanism.
5: What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship? At what stages, from primary school through to university, should it be (a) available, and (b) compulsory? Should there be any exemptions? Should there be more emphasis on political participation, both inside and outside classes? How effective is current teaching? Do the curriculum and the qualifications that are currently offered need amending?

5.1
Citizenship education requires the broad-based education of individuals and communities. Reforms to citizenship education should therefore form one small aspect of a more systemic reform of education in the United Kingdom.

5.2
We must aim to rebalance the objectives of school education away from its currently overwhelming emphasis on the production of a service economy workforce. Without this wider reform, any attempt to build a better form of citizenship education will remain piecemeal, and risks being undermined by a systemic drive to create individualised and specialised producers and consumers, often at the cost of developing shared, lived experience and social bonds.

5.3
There are opportunities for Higher Education to play a more constructive role. For example, we would recommend consideration of a significant reform to undergraduate degree courses, re-tooling them to four-year courses that include community, citizenship, and cohesion activities taking up one of those years (for example, two placements of six months). Fee waivers should also be used to incentivise civic engagement activities among students.

5.4
Civic engagement activities that foster connections between schools and school-age children from different communities would be especially valuable in the developing an atmosphere of inclusion and tolerance at the foundation of each individual’s experience of citizenship.

5.5
Citizenship education cannot shy away from being political education. Our politics, both in terms of the architecture of Britain’s political structures but also the parties, ideas, and issues that make up our national political debate, must be taught.

5.6
We believe that a fuller political education will prove more engaging to young people, and treat them as adults with the right to express an opinion and the responsibility to recognise and respect this right among their peers.
6: Do voluntary citizenship programmes such as the National Citizen Service do a good job of creating active citizens? Are they the right length? Should they be compulsory, and if so, when? Should they include a greater political element? Should they lead to a more public citizenship ceremony? Are they good value for money? What other routes exist for creating active citizens?

6.1
We believe that programmes such as the National Citizenship Service (NCS) have not been run and resourced at the levels required to make a significant social impact.

6.2
There is a wider issue for NCS, in that the range of activities does not appear distinct from traditional ‘employability’ activities. Any form of NCS-like activity cannot simply be another route towards a better-looking CV, either in the form of building skill-sets or showing commitment to ‘extra-curricular’ pursuits.

6.3
Citizenship must be taught and (more importantly) lived as a status that is different, and ultimately superior, to an individual’s role and location within a prevailing economic system.

6.4
Finally, we would note that the framing of a National Citizenship Service is unlikely to generate enthusiasm. Naming is important; why, in the naming of this programme, has it been decided to associate citizenship in the minds of young people with the idea that they are obliged to serve, when it could instead be configured to emphasise the values of community, reciprocity, and commitment?
7: How can society support civic engagement? What responsibility should central government, devolved and local governments, third sector organisations and the individual have for encouraging civic engagement? What can the Government and Parliament do to support civil society initiatives to increase civic engagement?

Central Government:

7.1 We believe that central government must do more to identify existing, but unrecognised, examples of successful participation and cohesion (as per our evidence in para 1.4). There are many ways in which civic society already produces groups and activities from which central government may be able to learn about, and disseminate examples of good practice across other levels of government and educational institutions.

7.2 A genuine devolution of power to local authorities would also send a strong signal that power is moving into proximity with citizens. We have had a measure of decentralisation of decision-making, but substantive devolution (of revenue-raising, spending, and service commissioning powers) must be a part of encouraging a genuine democratic renewal.

7.3 Central government could also consider a similar devolution to our Youth Parliament. Rather than existing as a debating society, extend genuine responsibilities, decision-making powers, and the requisite funding for this Parliament to make a real difference in people’s lives, and therefore merit the wider engagement of young people.

Devolved Government:

7.4 Whilst we note with interest the attempts of the Scottish Government to develop a sense of ‘civic nationalism’ in Scotland, we are not convinced that devolved administrations are proximate enough to our communities to foster a wider culture of civic engagement.

Local Government:

7.5 We believe that local government does have the potential to make a positive difference in this area. Initiatives that are locally-derived and tailored to local circumstances are likely to prove more effective than a ‘one size fits all’ template developed in Whitehall.
It is also easier for individuals to communicate and participate directly in local government. This is the point at which power and the political community are most proximate to citizens and our lives.

What is missing from local government is the resource needed to build and maintain a ‘civic infrastructure’. Civic infrastructure comprises the spaces, facilities and institutions in which it is possible to practise citizenship. These are community spaces, institutions such as libraries, parks, and museums. Without places to practise citizenship, any ‘lessons’ in citizenship will be impossible to apply and, as a result, quickly forgotten.

Local political leadership also needs refreshing and upskilling. Any initiative to renew or revitalise civic engagement must drive towards a cultural as well as economic shift – which would then be self-fulfilling. A commitment to ‘civic infrastructure’ must be met by a commitment of local leaders to use this infrastructure in a way that will open spaces and opportunities for participation, and for leadership, beyond those individuals and groups who regularly benefit from them today.

Individuals:

There is a problem in the discourse of ‘individual responsibility’. The concept is often used to shift an obligation away from a more powerful and capable institution (for example, the state) onto individuals who may not be fully aware of, or capable of ‘living up to’, the responsibilities expected of them.
8: What are the values that all of us who live in Britain should share and support? Can you identify any threats to these values, which affect the citizenship of, for instance, women or various minority groups? If so, how can their citizenship be strengthened?

8.1
We fear this question will always appear loaded when framed in terms of ‘threats’ to values, and segues too easily into threats ‘from’ certain groups. This leads to a confrontational and exclusionary construction of citizenship, based on the assertion of incompatible values.

8.2
The recent experience of France shows the danger of combining a discourse of exclusively ‘national’ values and a combative mode of enforcement for community cohesion in a complex and multicultural modern society.

8.3
Current approaches to British values are too coercive, and have the effect of alienating all those who experience difference from those stated ideals. What is needed is a genuine dialogue across communities (especially under-represented communities) about what our values actually are. Everyone living and working in Britain has a right to participate in the determination of our values and to contribute to their fulfilment.
9: Why do so many communities and groups feel “left behind”? Are there any specific factors which act as barriers to active citizenship faced by different communities or groups - white, BME, young, old, rural, urban? How might these barriers be overcome?

9.1
Any discussion of the roots of the current phenomenon of the ‘left behind’ begins with the condition of manifold and massive inequalities across the United Kingdom. Sadly, ours is a country that is riven with vast inequalities of wealth and opportunity. This will continue to weigh upon any attempt to create formal equalities while it remains clear that, substantively, a small number of privileged groups remain preferentially treated and insulated from the social consequences of economic shocks, such as that of 2007-2008 and the austerity programme that followed it.

9.2
We must also sound a note of caution in the use of the term ‘left behind’, which carries with it some problematic implications:

- Firstly, asking why groups and communities feel left behind, shifts the burden of responsibility onto the communities and groups themselves. We cannot individualise responsibility for social inequalities; it is a collective problem.
- Secondly, the term implies that those groups are missing out on developments that are fundamentally positive. We do not believe that ‘left behind’ is necessarily the right term, if those communities who have ‘gone ahead’ have only done so to arrive at a position of greater economic uncertainty, precarity, low wage growth, further erosion of social bonds, and so on.

9.3
An exercise in examining, and potentially re-defining, what is held to be a positive social value, may help re-assess and mitigate the discourse of being ‘left behind’. For example, if community were to be as valued as mobility (currently treated as a positive end-in-itself), or public transport over private vehicle use, this shift in value would quickly correct the impression that traditional communities and groups have missed out on the (semi-mythical) benefits of a hyper-mobile labour force.
10: How do you see the relationship between citizenship and civic engagement on the one hand and social cohesion and integration on the other? What effect does the level of diversity in schools and workplaces have on integration in society as a whole? How can diversity and integration be increased concurrently?

10.1
The frayed nature of the UK’s social compact has been starkly illustrated by the recent events at Grenfell Tower, and the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London. We believe that a renewed sense of citizenship and civic engagement has the potential to provide a foundation for greater social cohesion, but only if developed in conversation with Britain’s communities rather than defined and imposed ‘from above’.

10.2
We would reiterate the importance of shared experience as a basis for social cohesion. A sense of community, commonality, or common purpose cannot be instilled in a classroom lesson or from a government-authored workbook. It must be a lived experience, beginning from a young age, formed around activities and opportunities to participate that bring people together and let them find their own ways of interacting and building social links.

10.3
Governments at all levels can play a constructive role in facilitating this experience: creating investments and incentives for the creation of networks and programmes, from primary school up (and potentially beyond) higher education, that will give citizens the chance to build the ‘horizontal’ social links that will form the basis for genuine and sustainable concept of citizenship.

10.4
In addition to facilitating engagement and participation programmes, we must return to the concept of ‘civic infrastructure’ and how essential it is to provide spaces in which citizenship can be practised, if it is to take root in the lived experience of our citizens. Our project has research evidence of the importance of civic infrastructure for effective civic engagement and social cohesion at community level. The importance of accessible village halls, or the provision of non-marketised childcare within the community, should not be undervalued. Often, these institutions and services are the difference-maker between engagement and disaffection.
11: How important are levels of English proficiency for first and second generation immigrants and what could be done to increase them, including through support for ESOL classes? Are there particular barriers faced by newcomers to Britain? Could the naturalisation process, including the citizenship test, be improved and if so, how?

11.1 We have research experience the home-making practices of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women in Glasgow. We have found English language proficiency to be important to the feeling of belonging given the capacity afforded to express needs and feelings sufficiently, but advise against overestimating its importance, or making English proficiency a basis or litmus test for effective engagement. A focus on language risks limiting the question of engagement and cohesion among newly-arrived migrant communities.

11.2 Citizenship can only be based in reciprocity, not coercive conformity. The framing of the question again risks individualising responsibility for a collective obligation, and making groups who cannot speak English or are ‘not trying hard enough’ targets for social stigma and exclusion.

11.3 ESOL classes are a valuable tool and require continuing support. Cuts to ESOL class provision are already proving bad for progressive cohesion and integration. All support which can enable language improvement must be sufficiently funded if individuals and groups are to develop the tools necessary to overcome linguistic barriers.

11.4 We would also remark that childcare is an issue here too. College-based ESOL classes (which in our experience are taught to a higher standard than many community-based courses resulting in an official qualification) are often inaccessible for women who require childcare to attend. This has unintentionally created a gendered, two-tier system that is negatively impacting the ability of many first-generation immigrant women to access the best education. Urgent consideration must be given to the introduction of supported childcare at colleges teaching ESOL classes, or to supporting forms of non-marketised community childcare, accessible to all.
12: Can you give examples of initiatives and role models that have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society?

12.1

We would highlight the role played by Britain’s popular culture in opening up the space for widespread and public acceptance of the positive roles played by other cultures in the creation of what we should now regard as ‘traditionally’ British:

- The BBC television show Blue Peter has shown a commitment to diversity in its presenters for many years
- Our footballers have provided role models for BAME sporting achievement and for integration and cohesion within a team (and wider fan community)
- We saw a distinctly positive reaction to Nadia Hussain’s success in the Great British Bake Off, her participation opened up an ongoing discussion about how cultures in Britain can interact in a positive and mutually-constitutive way. Although, it is equally important to be wary of the construction of certain individuals as 'good immigrants' as this polarises the debate in ways which are too simplistic.
- Access to international travel has allowed millions of UK citizens to broaden their cultural horizons through the experience of other cultures, lessons which can then be applied in the context of diversity at home

12.2

The common theme that unites all of these is that they are non-prescriptive. They have not been mandated or enforced as an educative exercise by the state. They are examples of the effectiveness of lived experience as the basis for genuine civic engagement. This is a lesson we continue to return to as our experience grounded in extensive research has told us it is the key to creating a genuinely sustainable sense of citizenship that can be fostered, protected, and enjoyed by all citizens in our contemporary society.
13: Further Reflections – Opportunity for new study

13.1
As the Committee is no doubt aware, there is a significant problem in constructing concepts such as ‘British values’, ‘citizenship’, and ‘civic engagement’ in conversation with groups who are already a part of that conversation.

13.2
We would tentatively suggest the danger of a form of ‘survivorship bias’ in basing a response solely on the replies accumulated through this enquiry. Any groups aware enough to submit a piece of evidence in response to a call from a House of Lords select committee is, in our estimation, already more connected and engaged to existing civic/political processes than the communities and groups whose voices we must hear.

13.3
The next step for this inquiry should be to consider how to reach, and how to hear, those groups that are ‘left behind’, under-represented, or otherwise lacking from this top-level civic conversation. The aim of this outreach exercise should be threefold:

- To investigate impediments to participation and engagement (as this current inquiry has set out to do)
- To discover the values that could form the basis for greater social cohesion in a non-prescriptive way
- Enable state recognition of currently-existing but unrecognised forms of participation, being practiced throughout communities within the UK

13.4
This exercise must be undertaken with the object of creating a genuine conversation about what values should underpin a forward-looking British citizenship, in which as broad an array as possible of voices are heard and engaged in carefully mediated dialogue with one another. Perhaps this could take the form of a series of public debates and discussions in a wide range of places; such as village halls, working men’s clubs, schools and religious centres. The difficulty lies in the careful mediation between groups whose various opinions about what constitutes ‘British values and citizenship’ may be potentially fractious. This would have to be professionally and mindfully managed.

13.5
We believe that the experience of the Understanding Everyday Participation project has
developed a series of methodologies that can assist in the creation of this wider exercise. We have substantial experience of working with hard-to-reach and under-/un-represented communities in a way that allows for genuine and substantive interactions, on their terms, and generates outcomes that can be used as a basis for evidence-informed policy change.

13.6
We would be happy to share this experience with members of the committee should you wish to consider taking this further step.
Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values

UEP is pioneering a new vision of the relationship between participation and cultural value. Using advanced and innovative research methods, it challenges traditional boundaries of 'culture', exposing the role these play in the making of economic, social and geographical inequalities, and pointing to the ways in which everyday cultural practices help to define, sustain and develop communities.

The project is led by Professor Andrew Miles (School of Social Sciences at the University of Manchester) and involves an interdisciplinary team of researchers based at universities of Manchester, Exeter, Leicester and Warwick.