

Institution: University of Sussex		
Unit of Assessment: 34 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management		
Title of case study: Supporting youth advocacy to achieve positive campaign outcomes and change in heritage organisations		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Pollyanna Ruiz	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer in Media and Communications	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: September 2014 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact The campaign to retain the Southbank Centre's 'Undercroft' as a place for skateboarders rather than retail cuts to the heart of heritage debates: what makes a space valuable and who gets to decide this? Ruiz's research examined young people's attachments to the Undercroft over its forty-year history. The research created a newly collaborative relationship between the Long Live Southbank (LLSB) campaign and the Southbank Centre, resulting in the restoration of the Undercroft and the creation of a Children and Young People's Centre. It informed a new grant programme for young people from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The research changed perceptions of heritage and skating, facilitating change for skater groups, and generated advocacy support and improved services for young people.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research Dr Ruiz specialises in researching the way that dissent is mediatized, and what this means for social and political activism. Her monograph <i>Articulating dissent: protest and the public sphere</i> [R6] combined fine-grained ethnography with the analysis of uses of media in various protest movements (the use of media by protesters as well as the media representation of protests and protesters). It is this analytic mixture that combines investigating the actuality and potential of media in social struggles with a deeply ethnographic approach to understanding the experiences of dissenters that lay the foundations of the research for this project. <i>Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage</i>, an AHRC-funded project that started at the end of 2014, was designed and directed by Ruiz and included peer researchers from the Universities of Glasgow (Madgin), East Anglia (Snelson), and Newcastle (Webb). The research was collaborative and Ruiz's contribution ran across all aspects of the project. As PI she structured the project, assembled archival material, conducted walking interviews, analysed findings, produced and co-directed the films, organized the workshop and produced the website.</p> <p>The research focused on young people's attachments to the Southbank Undercroft – the "world's oldest surviving skateboarder spot" – and how their campaign to resist its replacement with shops and restaurants (a planned 'refurbishment' that the Southbank Centre announced in 2013) might involve ideas about heritage. The research followed the Long Live Southbank (LLSB) campaign that was established by the Undercroft community to save the site [R5]. Working with a grassroots organisation (BrazenBunch) and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the research investigated the way young people communicated their attachments to policy makers and the wider public. The research used oral histories, filmed walking interviews, visual and documentary analysis.</p>		

The problem-oriented research (How can the campaign to save the Undercroft succeed? How can the Southbank Centre incorporate skateboarding into their self-understanding? How can heritage be rethought to include skateboarding?) produced two widely disseminated research films *You Can't Move History* [R1] (produced by Ruiz) and *You Can Make History* [R5] (co-directed by Ruiz); a report published by the Heritage Lottery fund [R2]; and (to date) two peer-reviewed journal articles [R3 and R4]. The extensive ethnographic research revealed the value of the Undercroft as a 'found space' for skateboarding [R3] (as opposed to purpose-built spaces) which embodies subcultural experience and knowledge (subcultural heritage, subcultural memory). It also recognised the importance of the ways in which young people's conceptualisation of time differed from the understandings currently embedded in the legislative heritage system. This unique research was the first time that cultural studies scholarship had focused critical attention on the overlap between subcultural knowledge and the cultural politics of heritage. The deeply ethnographic work challenged heritage discourse's understanding of temporality, while complicating our understanding of subcultural experience (for instance the conceptualising of skateboarding as a form of action art).

3. References to the research

R1: Ruiz, P., Snelson, T., Madgin, R., and Webb, D. 'You Can't Move History' (2015) Film produced in collaboration with BrazenBunch and directed by Paul Richards and Winstan Whitter. This film won Best Film in the AHRC's 2016 Research in Film Awards. This can be accessed here: <http://www.ymch.co.uk/you-cant-move-history/>

R2: Madgin, R., Webb, D., Ruiz, P. and Snelson, T. *Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage; Time, Place and Communication*. (2016) Report on young people's relationship to heritage published by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This report was based on the AHRC grant detailed below. <http://www.ymch.co.uk/publications/> Available on request.

R3: Madgin, R., Webb, D., Ruiz, P. and Snelson, T. (2018) Resisting relocation and reconceptualizing authenticity: the experiential and emotional values of the Southbank Undercroft, London, UK *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. 24.6, pp. 585-598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1399283> Submitted to REF2.

R4: Ruiz, P., Snelson, T., Madgin, R. and Webb, D., (2019) Look What We Made: Long Live Southbank and (Sub)cultural Heritage, *Cultural Studies*. 34.3 pp.392-417. Submitted to REF2.

R5: Ruiz, P., 'You Can Make History' (2019) Film produced in collaboration with LLSB and supported by SBC. Directed by Blaney, Buck-Joyce and Ruiz. This can be accessed here: <http://www.ymch.co.uk/you-can-make-history-film/>

R6: Ruiz, P., (2014) *Articulating dissent: protest and the public sphere*. Pluto Press, London UK. ISBN 9780745333052. Submitted to REF2.

Grants:

PI: Pollyanna Ruiz, 'You Can't Move History. You Can Secure the Future': *Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage*, AHRC, 1 December 2014 to 1 January 2016, £43,320, AH/M006158/1

PI: Pollyanna Ruiz, 'You Can Make History: Extending and developing youth engagement in cultural heritage', AHRC, 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019, £80,088, AH/R004544/1

4. Details of the impact

The impact of the research has resulted in long-term changes to the built environment of the Southbank, in changes to heritage policy, and in changed perceptions and practices around heritage and skateboarding.

Transformative Communication

The project's central mode of impact was via the films and associated workshops. These allowed the skaters' voices to be heard by institutional stakeholders including representatives from Southbank Centre (SBC), Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England, the Mayor's Office, and others. The Youth Engagement officer at the BFI commented that the film and the workshop "bridged the gaps between the young people and the policymakers" creating a mutual intelligibility which hitherto hadn't been possible [S1]. This was recognized by the Director of Policy and Partnerships at the Southbank Centre, who said that the workshop "brought all the participants together" and "helped lift the lessons and the key meanings out of the heat of the campaign" and made the SBC realise why "you can't move this history" [S2].

Participating in this research increased skaters' capacity to connect with policy and statutory bodies and "gave confidence and a voice to people who wouldn't have it otherwise" [S3a]. A skateboarder who spoke at the workshop, said "it brought us together with a lot of people who it is helpful for us to have conversations with" [S3b]. Another young skater, who at 15 had been expelled from school, was able to gain "authority and confidence" from speaking on the workshop panel [S3a].

Following on from the first workshop, and as a result of improved relations, LLSB and the SBC successfully applied for planning permission to extend and restore the Undercroft. This work (which includes a Centre for Children and Young People) was completed shortly after the second workshop. As [text removed for publication] of LLSB argues: "If Pollyanna [Ruiz] hadn't done that film that history wouldn't have been recorded and that valuable case study material which has inspired so many people wouldn't exist and those unheard voices that the film documents would never have been heard" [S3a].

Changing heritage organisations

The value of this research was recognised by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) who asked the researchers to create a report in which young people could express their sense of value in relation to historic places; its purpose was to enable their views to inform the ongoing evolution of the heritage sector in the UK, particularly the HLF's youth programme, 'Young Roots' [R2]. Deputy Director of Strategy Karen Brookfield noted that the research fed "into a more general strategic thinking ...[about]...our next strategic framework, what will HLF fund, and how" [S4]. In 2016 the Heritage Lottery Fund launched a £10million investment to make heritage relevant to the lives of young people aged 11-25 [S5]. Brookfield described this major new development as containing the 'legacy' of Ruiz's project [S6]. The extent of this change was recognized by the head of Policy and Partnerships at the Southbank Centre Mike McCart, who said the research "grabbed both Historic England ... and Heritage Lottery Fund's interest. They were always being subjected to criticism about being fuddy duddy and only talking to old people ... both those conservation bodies began to realize that there was a thing called communal value or intangible value" [S2].

Outside of the HLF, Ruiz's research has been used to evaluate heritage programmes. When the consultancy agency MHM Insight (an agency supporting charity, heritage and cultural organisations with audience engagement) were asked to evaluate an English Heritage project 'Shout out Loud' and a National Trust project working with young people in community green spaces, they adopted the ethos of Ruiz's project by valuing young people speaking in their own voices, the role of youth-led design, and the concept of 'found space' [S7]. [text removed for publication] of MHM Insight, said: "Pollyanna's research has served as a constructive model of good practice for us, and had a tangible value to us in terms of learning for our organisation" [S7].

Changing Perceptions and Practices

You Can't Move History won best film in the AHRC's Research in Film Awards 2016. The panel noted that "this remarkable piece of work challenges easy assumptions about heritage and

creates a fascinating portrait of contemporary urban outsidership in the process" [S8]. The extensive dissemination of the film (20,000 views on Vimeo and YouTube, presentations in Sweden, Spain, Austria, Italy, Canada, Taiwan, Australia as well as in the UK to over 1,000 people) has altered perceptions about heritage and subcultures. For example, a programme officer at UNICEF UK said that the film "opened my eyes to the beauty and far-reaching benefits of the skate community for young people" [S9]. The Director of the Museum of London has added it to the museum's archive and said; "this research deeply resonates with me as I consider how to create a more tangible and connected place called the Museum of London" [S10]. And Sara Crofts, Head of Historic Environment, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) said "I try and use [the project] where I can around getting people to rethink their notion of heritage, both policy-makers, potential grant applicants or stakeholders..." [S11].

The research has also been used by grassroots skater organisations from Gateshead to Norwich. As just one example, Skate Southampton used the film (and Ruiz) as the basis for talking to local councillors and representatives of the police. The film helped "explain to people clearly what we wanted to achieve" [S3c]. One major tangible result was an increase in funding for revamping the city skate parks from £50K to £250K.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1. [text removed for publication] Youth Engagement, BFI. Workshop questionnaire, 2 Nov 2014

S2. Mike McCart, Head of Policy and Partnerships, Southbank centre, Interview, 2 March 2017.

S3. Impact Testimonials from Skaters and Campaigners:

a. Statement from [text removed for publication], LLSB campaigner, 11 May 2020.

b. Skater, Interview, 22 February 2017.

c. [text removed for publication], Skater Skate Southampton statement, 14 May 2020

S4. Karen Brookfield, Deputy Director of Strategy, HLF. Interview 8 March 2017.

S5. What is Kick the Dust? Heritage Fund (August 2019).

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/blogs/what-kick-dust>

S6. Karen Brookfield, Deputy Director of Strategy, HLF, Tweet. 11 November 2016

S7. Statement from [text removed for publication] MHMInsight, 12 August 2020

S8. Research in Film Award Winners 2016: You Can't Move History (AHRC)

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/readwatchlisten/features/research-in-film-award-winners-you-can-t-move-history/>

S9. Programme officer, UNICEF UK, workshop feedback, 22 March 2019

S10. Sharon Ament, Director of the Museum of London Follow up email, 2 March 2017

S11. Sarah Crofts, Head of Historic Environment, Heritage Lottery Fund Interview 16 March 2017.