**Project title:** A critical study of the uses of big data and data visualisation in addressing young people’s opportunities for contributing to cultural and social life.

**Supervisors:**  Dr Annette Naudin, Professor Rajinder Dudrah

Cultural partners:

Anisa Haghdadi, Beatfreeks Collective – Doink <http://www.beatfreeks.com/doink-the-story/>

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**Project description:**

This collaborative project seeks to address issues of inequality in disadvantaged young people’s access to cultural, social and civic life. O’Brien and Oakley (2015) have argued that more and better data is necessary if we are to understand inequalities and address issues of social justice. The use of data as evidence of young people’s engagement is increasingly important as a means of evidencing and communicating trends (Ofcom, 2016). This project seeks to interrogate and explore the challenges of using data, and data visualisation tools as a methodology for communicating disadvantaged young people’s cultural, social and civic engagement, including collective practices and entrepreneurial opportunities. In collecting data and creating data visualisation tools, we are concerned about the robustness of the data, the ‘story’ it presents and how this is created, used and interpreted by policy makers, stakeholders and young people themselves. Can a critical approach to data collecting and data visualisation offer new insights? This study presents the challenges and limitations of big data and data visualisation as a tool for analysing engagement with implications for policy makers, cultural and creative industries organisations working with young people.

**The project will focus on the following research questions:**

1. How can critically-informed data visualisation be used to address inequalities in young people’s engagement in cultural, social and civic life?
2. What creative processes can capture and communicate data for policy makers and stakeholders in order to develop new ways of thinking and working with disadvantaged young people?
3. How can we work with disadvantaged young people to problematize data collection and visualisation methods and inform policy makers, designers, and other stakeholders?

 Embedded in BCUs new STEAMHouse facility in Digbeth, Birmingham, amongst creative professionals and organisations in the city and working with personnel at Beatfreeks and Culture Central the successful applicant will have opportunities to showcase their research project and develop meaningful networks and relationships in the cultural industries.