were united in the belief that areas like Peckham, stigmatised in the media as no hope ghettos, have incredible potential for self transformation, development and innovation.

Black urbanism, in the way I have framed it, has a vital role to play in this. Not as an end in itself. The goal is not to build black cities for black people. Rather, it is to explore and develop the incredible creative energy that exists in so-called black areas: a potential that can contribute to the sustainable development of the whole city. The formula is simple. To paraphrase the thoughts of an enlightened friend of mine, the scientist and businessman Samuel Ogunsalu, we must contemplate, innovate and liberate:

- **Contemplate**: we must challenge and re-think our negative perceptions of stigmatised areas.
- **Innovate**: we must unleash the creative potential of inhabitants.
- **Liberate**: we must allow communities the democratic freedoms to create their own destinies.

A Manifesto for Black Urbanism

Paul Goodwin

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...
2. Studies of discrimination and urban disadvantage do not cover the totality of the black urban experience.

Black people are not just victims. Histories of community building; struggles over housing, jobs, and space; art and creative practices, the construction and regeneration of urban landscapes, and their relationship to black and migrant communities, all need to be recognised addressed by urbanists and planners today. In other words, black and immigrant communities have contributed much to the current vibrancy of British cities. These communities need to be central to any inner city urban regeneration efforts, such as the 2012 Olympics and the transformation of the Thames Gateway.
Re-Visioning Black Urbanism is a research initiative being developed at the Centre for Urban and Community Research by Paul Goodwin. It explores new modes of inhabiting, imagining and making cities from progressive black and culturally diverse perspectives. The project critically examines the impact, contribution and engagement of black and minority ethnic communities with contemporary urbanism: the physical, economic, social, political and cultural environments in metropolitan areas.

Research

The research component of the project will:

1. Re-think the way black communities have been conceptualised in Western urban thought
2. Research case studies of black urbanism as 'dissident' socio-spatial interventions in cities involving specific forms of spatial knowledges, discourses and strategies
3. Explore alternative visions of urban life by black artists, architects and thinkers

The research will encompass critiques of urban epistemology and urban rationalities by engaging with the work of writers as diverse as WEB DuBois, Angela Davis, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy.

Poverty, as enthusiasts of urban decay or a culture of despair, oversimplify the city building process not just as a process of infection, contagion, plague, degeneration and miscegenation. They have been associated with the black presence in cities. This is the fear of a black planet articulated by the seminal rap group Public Enemy: blackness perceived as a sign of urban disorder and chaos, a harbinger of death and destruction. Black urbanism, in this sense, can be seen as a schizoid sign that haunts and inhabits urbanism and the myth of the white city. It is the ghost in the machine that is capable of inducing the urban machine into moments of paranoid breakdown (riots, moral panics over crime) while also reconfiguring the machine into new modes of innovation, creativity and expression (music, arts, architecture). To understand the complex nature of black urbanism means, in my opinion, understanding and working through the productive nature of this contradiction.

The city, the urban milieu, is the expression are defining features of black and African diasporic practices as many great scholars such as WEB DuBois, Angela Davis, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy have proved in their writing. My project is to create a discourse and practice of black urbanism that goes beyond the limited, singular understanding of the black urban experience represented in ideas and authors of the city building process not just as a process of infection, contagion, plague, degeneration and miscegenation; one in which black communities in these same cities around the globe are living in conditions of squalor, extreme disadvantage do not cover the totality of the black urban experience.

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