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SURVEY AND SPECULATION

Making manifestos for urban history: creative collaboration in a conference workshop

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Abstract
This survey reflects on a creative workshop which the authors ran for the 'The State of Urban History: Past, Present, Future' conference (July 2023). 'Making manifestos for urban history' was an experiment to encourage small group work and co-operative outputs in a conference setting, allowing for an atypical 'many-to-many' model of participation. During the session, five groups each produced a manifesto poster addressing issues that they thought were important for the future of urban history. The survey sets out the form the workshop followed, considers those who were involved and comments on how successful the workshop was in fostering conference community and active learning. Feedback recorded at the end of the session indicated that it was indeed successful in both these areas. Overall, the workshop demonstrated that when urban historians work together across generations and continents, they produce work of real value, which is resilient and sustainable.

This survey reflects on a workshop the authors ran at 'The State of Urban History: Past, Present, Future', a conference marking 50 years of the Cambridge journal *Urban History* held at the University of Leicester on 11–13 July 2023. The session was entitled 'Making manifestos for urban history' and involved small group work to produce a collaborative output in the form of subject manifestos. It explains what we did during the workshop, discusses the results of the collaboration and outlines the participant feedback we received. It explores the value of the workshop format for a history conference and considers possible future sessions. While we do discuss some of the content of the manifestos, our main focus is on the value of creative co-operative interaction in a conference environment.

The idea for the urban history manifestos session emerged out of a social meeting on a campsite. We decided conferences needed to be more interactive, collaborative and egalitarian, and that workshops offered a greater depth of discussion and active learning than is generally possible in the standard 'paper and questions' format. While valuing the chance to listen to research conclusions and scholarly discussion, we agreed that the existing format meant that conference participation is often characterized by passivity. Alan Skelton raised the issue back in 1997 in his discussion

of educational conferences. He wanted all conference participants to be 'genuinely engaged with each other…to have some opportunity to develop their understanding'.[1] In a similar way, we wanted to do something active that encouraged mutual engagement and modelled good practice in inclusive thinking. We wanted to move away from the traditional one-to-many communication of academic conferences and towards many-to-many and conversational communication. We also wished to create a non-hierarchical conference space where knowledge and understanding could be built and exchanged, and innovative thought encouraged. Most importantly, we wanted the experience of creative collaboration to help people make connections and help foster an inviting conference community.

We decided to design a workshop format focused on interaction with a common task. Initially, we worked on a plan that involved small groups researching an aspect of urban history together. However, we could not settle on an aspect of urban history that would be equally inclusive to a multi-national conference. Moreover, there was the question of how we might overcome the problem of access to resources. With a conference cohort ranging from powerful academics to postgraduate students, it seemed important to identify a common purpose to facilitate inclusivity. We decided that to create urban history manifestos was a suitable exercise for a conference on the past, present and future of urban history. We labelled this a Charter, following in the footsteps of the British Chartist movement of the mid-nineteenth century. The Chartists identified six demands that they hoped would establish and safeguard an extended, inclusive democracy; we wanted our participants to identify their shared hopes and aims for their discipline for the future.

We soon realized that running a workshop of this kind would require careful choreographing. Initially, we had planned for a two-hour session to produce a single manifesto from the group work. This would have needed more time than was available, and so we prioritized participant interaction over producing a 'consensus' output. We know from our teaching experience that collaborative work producing posters is a fun activity, especially if it involves stickers, 'Post-its' (sticky notes) and marker pens. We were keen to focus as much on the collaborative process as on the outcome or product: we wanted the experience to be lively and enjoyable because, as Sam Shields shows, people learn when they have fun.[2] Our intention was to use physical creativity – even if in a very 'childlike' (and thus, easy to use) sense of shape, colour and collage – to encourage intellectual innovation and non-competitive collaboration.[3]

The session took the following format. Attendees were split up into five groups as they entered the room. The number of groups was determined by the number of tables we had in the room with a maximum of six per table: one group had six members, the rest had five. We felt that it was important to split up friends to encourage participants to talk to new people. Since one of our stated aims for the session was to build community, mixing people up was important, as was setting a maximum group size to maximize potential talking time. We needed to keep the

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[1] A. Skelton, 'Conferences, conferences, conferences?', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 2 (1997), 69–72.

[2] S. Shields, '"My work is bleeding": exploring students' emotional responses to first-year assignment feedback', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 20 (2015), 613.

[3] 'Creativity can be seen as a product of openness, in that the liberation of forms of expression and low threshold to production encourages innovation and experimentation': M. Weller, 'The openness-creativity cycle in education', *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 1 (2012), 9, https://doi.org/10.5334/2012-02.

group 'small' but large enough to keep conversation going.[4] Although we give references from the published literature here, the main influence on our selection of six as a maximum size was the tacit knowledge derived from our experience working as adult educators for a variety of institutions and seeing 'what works'.

The first part of the session involved a quick quantitative overview of the main topics covered in the first *Urban History Yearbooks* (1974 to 1979 inclusive) to establish the heritage of the conference. The main topics were extracted from article titles and book reviews. When we were planning for a longer session, this was intended to be a more detailed discussion but once we knew we only had an hour and half, we felt it more important to cut our contribution to a contextual briefing and allow more time for group interaction. This introduction also included a brief all-groups warm-up activity in which we asked everyone to share current themes in urban history. We then introduced the main manifesto exercise, supplying definitions of 'charter' and 'manifesto'. The small groups were tasked with producing a manifesto for the next 50 years of urban history, or at least what people felt now should be important for the next few years. We asked each group to produce around six points for their manifesto. Sweets and coloured pens were provided to encourage an informal, inclusive and sharing activity. We offered some starting points to get the groups talking which included thinking about what was missing from the current conference.

Once the 30 minutes was completed, we displayed the five first-draft manifestos on the wall and moved onto our second activity. This entailed individuals commenting on the other groups' manifestos. The comments took the form of allocating cartoon stickers, so feedback was speedy and quite simplistic and reactive. Smiley face stickers were for any points people liked; stars were for points they really liked. Heart stickers were for the manifesto point people liked the most and the unicorn sticker indicated the overall manifesto people thought was the best. There was an unlimited supply of smileys and stars, but everyone only had one heart and one unicorn each. This activity was allocated 15 minutes, during which participants moved and conversed freely and people were also encouraged to take a break if they needed it. Using stickers in this manner, we deliberately emphasized quantity over quality in interactions *between* groups. This maximized the time for qualitative interactions *within* groups by eliminating any verbal 'report back' stage.

The third part of the workshop involved returning to the original working groups. For this activity, groups had to critically assess their original manifestos as a result of the sticker feedback and inspiration from reading other manifestos. We asked each group to make any desired changes or comments to their own manifestos, using sticky notes as a form of 'track change'. We permitted groups to add a seventh point to their charter at this stage if they wished. This activity again was allocated 15 minutes.

The final activity of the workshop involved completing a feedback form on the session. We wanted this firstly in case we decided to write this survey and, secondly (and more importantly), so we could do a better job as facilitators next time. The anonymous form asked people to circle their age group: 18–25, 25–35, 35–45, 55–65, 65+ and asked them to state which countries they had studied in for their degree(s).

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[4]For a bottom limit on small group size, see R. Rosales and J.L. Soldner, 'An assessment of group size in interteaching', *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 18 (2018), 105–17. For top limits, see P.H. Pollock, K. Hamann and B.M. Wilson, 'Learning through discussions: comparing the benefits of small-group and large-class settings', *Journal of Political Science Education*, 7 (2011), 48–64.

This was so we could get a sense of the age range contributing to the session as we were keen for this to be multi-generational collaboration. We also asked for the number of years they had been researching history on the assumption that this was not automatically related to age, especially for those who have come to history as adult learners. We left the definition of 'research' up to the participants. We gave five options by which they could summarize their overall experience: 'It was a nightmare'; 'It was okay I suppose'; 'It was different (in a largely good way)'; 'I had fun and learned some stuff'; and 'It's one of the best sessions I have attended at a conference.' The options were thus not the bland choices that usually characterize feedback forms but were unconventional and in keeping with the lighthearted spirit of the session. The first was a recognition that for some this kind of collaborative work could be extremely challenging; for example, anyone who was neurodiverse or who had hearing difficulties could have found the volume of chatter and high energy in the room difficult. We had made it clear in our abstract that this was going to be an interactive session. We now feel that the second and third options could have been better phrased for a multi-national, potentially neurodiverse, cohort as the phrases could be interpreted in different ways. The final option was meant to fit with the overall 'fun' tone of the session by being deliberately hyperbolic. The form also contained two open sections for comments: the first one asked 'was there anything good (or bad) you particularly got from the session?'; the other asked 'what would you have done differently and why?'. On leaving the workshop, all participants were awarded an 'Urban History Chartist' metal button badge to wear at the conference; we did this to encourage a sense of collective achievement and to prompt the participants to discuss the workshop and manifestos with other conference attendees.

The manifestos

All the working groups produced a complete poster manifesto in the allocated time. Although we asked for six points, one group had a manifesto with eight points and one had five points but added a sixth during the critical reflection activity. All groups made some comments or changes to their manifesto. Table 1 shows the charter points from the five manifestos with each row containing the points of a single charter. Original points are in plain font and subsequent edits and comments are shown in italics. The original and edited manifestos can be seen in Figures 1–5.

In the 30 minute session, a wealth of aims and ideas were generated by the manifesto working groups. The creative collaboration produced by groups who might have only just met was striking. We were impressed by the scale and ambition of the ideas presented, which illustrate the very real relevance and value of urban history to history, teaching and wider society. Table 1 shows the various manifesto points generated by the small groups and considers how they might be classified. It identifies common themes which emerged in the workshop: we are aware that there are other ways in which the different points could be classified and that not every point fits neatly into a single category (as we might expect). For example: 'A friendly, inclusive and equitable (emotional) community' could fit in either 'Community' or 'Inclusion'. These categories can be summarized into three broad areas: those concerned with urban history practice *inside* the academy, including teaching and research; those concerning urban history *outside* the academy (including extramural

Table 1. Charter points of each manifesto

	Innovation	Thinking for the future	Collaboration	Teaching and learning within the academy	Methods and approaches	Communication	Inclusion	Community
1	Employ AI [artificial intelligence] to its maximum positive potential: *Like the AI in case it takes over and decides it doesn't like you*	Making urban history essential to urban futures		Placing urban history at the heart of teaching *Mobilize resources to support ECRs in the job market and future careers*	Rethinking the relationship between urban and non-urban, beyond the urban/rural binary	Produce more diverse and accessible ways to communicate research	Data sovereignty: letting marginalized groups/people own their history	
2	UH needs to contribute to and politically engage with the critical issues of our present time; in 2023, the issues include climate, inequality, colonialism, war => *Self-advocacy for a research sector which is non-*	=> In order to do this we need to collaborate both across disciplines and outside of academia, while maintaining the rigor and value of historical analysis =>	See 'Inclusion'	=> This requires methods which are able to embrace a variety of knowledges=> *from whom and from where?*	See 'Inclusion'	We also need new ways to share knowledge and improve *equitability of* access to Urban History *Teaching is all a big part of this! Also what (physical) spaces do we share knowledge in, and how are they in(accessible)?*	This includes new ways to democratically co-produce knowledge *Marginalized communities => specific to where you work Sharing using different media as appropriate to the work and communities involved*	

Table 1. (*Continued*)

	Innovation	Thinking for the future	Collaboration	Teaching and learning within the academy	Methods and approaches	Communication	Inclusion	Community
	extractive and able to self-sustain. Funding!							
3	Make a difference Revolution =>*A revolutionary agenda Promotion of revolution => revolutionary urban manifesto*	*Solving future problems depends on knowing the past*	Collaborative, accountability, agenda setting and practice with underrepresented scholars and diverse communities [due to] Wealth accumulation and inequality (class/racial/gender/etc.); current planetary predicament; physical space and virtual space	*Make urban history popular*		Make knowledge more accessible to wider audience and powerful audience	Inclusive geographies and temporality	Cities are essential engines of a human society
4	*Encourage innovation and risk-taking in urban history*	All cities should produce a deep history ecological audit and respond to climate crisis	*Encourage co-production and knowledge*	All history departments have a right to an urban historian	See 'Thinking for the future'	All urban-dwellers have a right to their history *This includes marginalized groups*	Henceforth all sources should be digitized and publicly available *(what about objects?) Encourage inclusive*	Urban history should be responsible to networks of all kinds

(*Continued*)

Table 1. (*Continued*)

	Innovation	Thinking for the future	Collaboration	Teaching and learning within the academy	Methods and approaches	Communication	Inclusion	Community
							temporalities and geographies; encourage digital sovereignty	
5	Prepared to take risks to be experimental and innovative	The urban glue which binds different approaches and topics (e.g. queer history, animal history) *Planetary urbanism is here and now; Back to the future*		Annual parliaments (urban history group meeting) *More urban history scrapbooking sessions*	*Be more fun Have more stickers Buy 'What is urban history?' at your local bookshop*	*Use a variety of forms of communication and language Communicate clearly and concisely*	A friendly, inclusive and equitable (emotional) community Engage beyond the academy – co-production, co-creation and co-authoring	Relationship between people, places and things

The original points of each manifesto are in standard font. Additions or comments added during the third part of the session are in italics.
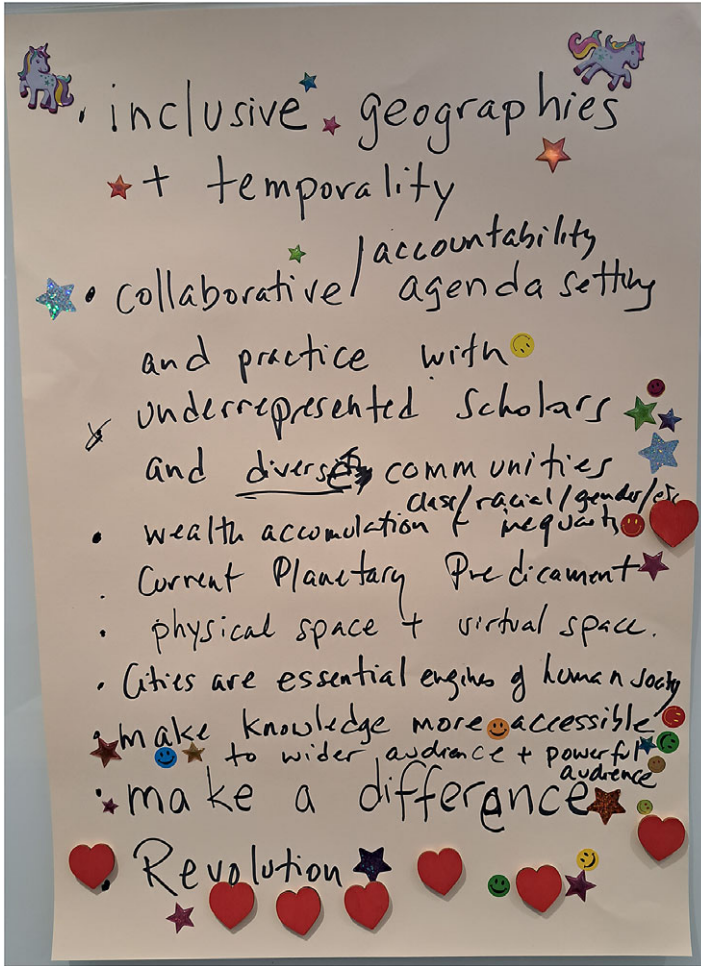
Figure 1. Workshop manifesto 1.

relationships and activities); and those which were philosophical or defining statements about the nature of the field.

The shared outlook and value systems that we might expect from practitioners of any academic discipline were evident. Ideas of collaboration, community and inclusion were present in all manifestos, as were assertions of the relevance of urban history to the current crises of climate change, global urbanism and inequality. All the writers asserted the need for urban history to be active extramurally, whether in the production or dissemination of research. It is perhaps not surprising that a self-selected group of urban history conference participants should be so inclined, but the coherence was clear in these areas. Some of the manifesto points also reflect the current stresses experienced in the humanities with funding, representation and access concerns articulated, for example: 'Self-advocacy for a research sector which is non-extractive and able
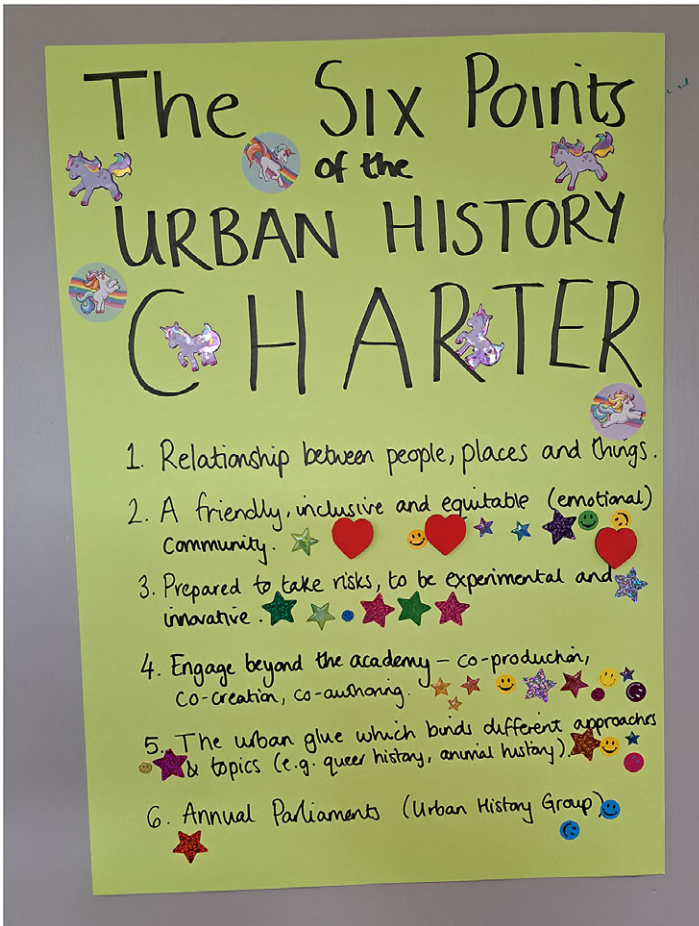
Figure 2. Workshop manifesto 2.

to self-sustain. Funding!' The statements concerning the means as to *how* urban history was to be undertaken were more disparate, such as: 'Employ AI to its maximum positive potential'; 'All history departments have a right to an urban historian'; 'Urban history should be responsible to networks of all kinds'. Charter points included future hopes for the subject, evidencing again a shared value system among participants.

Individual responses to the manifestos

In the second activity, the workshop participants read and discussed the displayed manifestos with enthusiasm; people moved around the room and interacted in a good-natured way with friendly comparison between groups. The stickers proved to be useful tools for people to critically engage with others' ideas in a quick, if simplistic way. Looking at the initial responses to the displayed manifestos, the
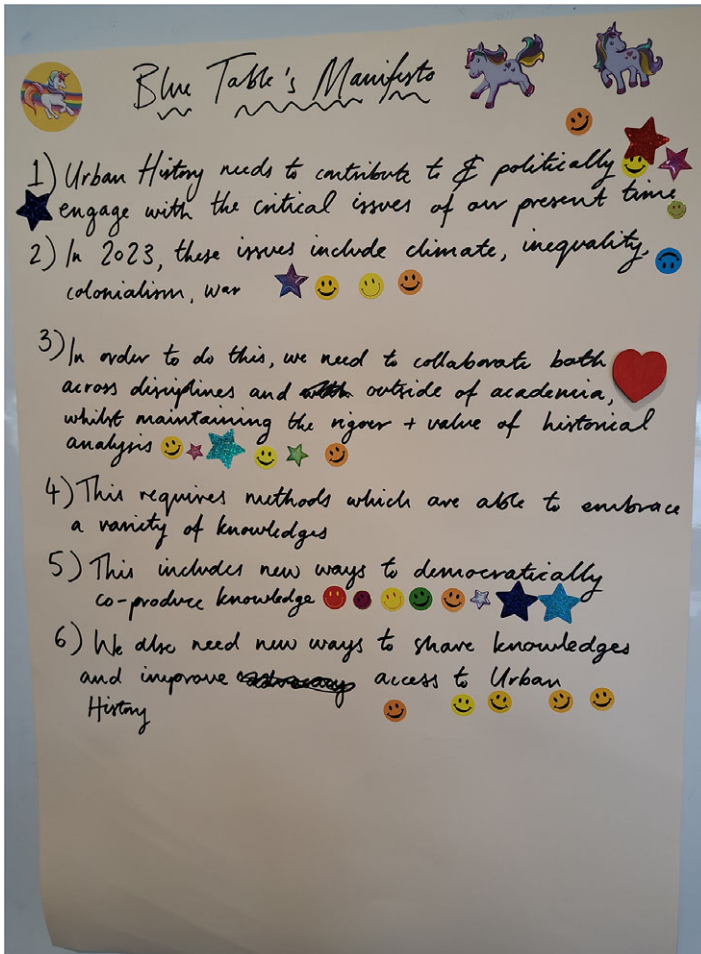
Figure 3. Workshop manifesto 3.

points which attracted the most positive feedback in terms of quantities of stars, smileys and heart stickers included: 'All urban-dwellers have a right to their history'; 'Rethinking the relationship between urban and non-urban, beyond the urban/rural binary'; 'Produce more diverse and accessible ways to communicate research'. The most sticker-endorsed point was 'Data sovereignty: letting marginalized groups/people own their history'. These most-liked points indicated a strong desire for urban history to include local researchers and the wider citizenry. They suggest a vision of a 'living' urban history which is 'outward facing' and integral to the towns and cities in which urban historians work.[5] The most-loved point, judged by the number of heart stickers it attracted, was 'revolution'.

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[5]S. Ewen, *What Is Urban History?* (Cambridge, 2016), 32; D. Hayden, 'The power of place: claiming urban landscapes as people's history', *Urban History*, 20 (1994), 484.
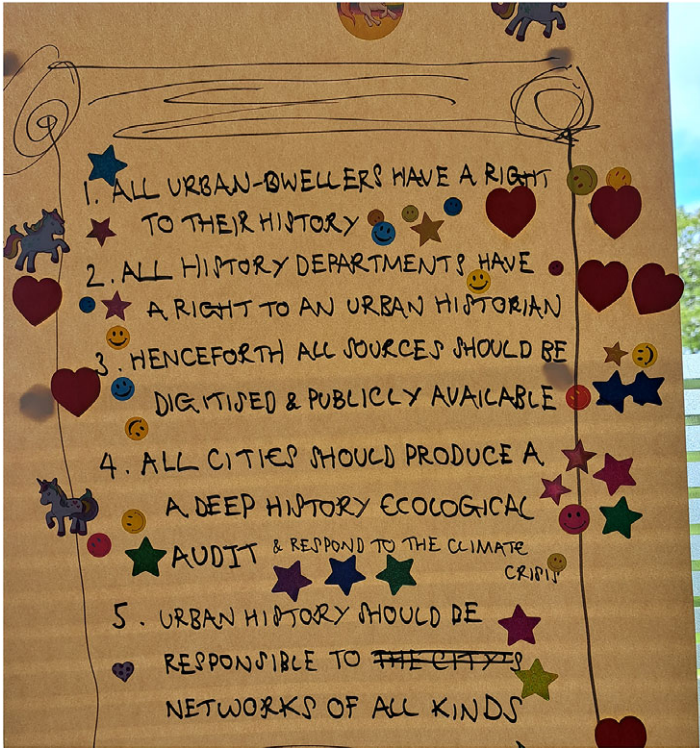
Figure 4. Workshop manifesto 4.

Feedback

All 26 participants filled in the feedback forms; this is an indicator in itself that we established a high degree of engagement from the whole group. In relation to the question about where people had completed their degree(s), several people in the room had more than one degree, as might be expected at an academic conference (see Table 2). Given the conference was in the UK, it was not surprising that the highest number of degrees were studied in the UK, including in England and Scotland, at 18. It is also not surprising, given the language of the conference and the UK visa regime, that USA (5) and Australia (3) were the next most popular countries to study in. Other countries represented in degree location were Israel, Canada, Belgium, The Netherlands, Japan, India, Denmark and Sweden. The largest age group cohort was 35–44 years; the smallest 18–24 (see Table 3). This probably reflects those most likely to get funding to go to international conferences. We asked participants how long they had been researching urban history, assuming they would be urban historians (see Table 4). In fact, three participants were not urban historians, while others could not quantify this in years, claiming they had been researching 'forever'. One response asked us to '[d]efine "researching" and "history"'.

Table 5 demonstrates that feedback from the workshop participants was over-whelmingly positive. This was supported by the comments in the open parts of the feedback form. Several responses explicitly linked the fun and relaxed atmosphere

Figure 5. Workshop manifesto 5.

Table 2. Country in which degree(s) were studied

Country of degree(s)	UK (18) including Scotland (2) England (6)	Belgium (1) Netherlands (1) Sweden (1) Denmark 1	USA (5) Canada (1)	Australia (3)	Israel (2)	Japan (1) India (1)
Total	18	4	6	3	2	2

directly to learning outcomes: 'Fun, a break. Chance to discuss BIG questions'; 'It made [me?] think really deeply while having fun. Made me realize creativity happens in a fun and relaxed environment'; 'Had a lovely time and learnt loads' and 'a fun, relaxed and inclusive session that I learned a lot from.' Importantly, this shows the

Table 3. Ages of workshop participants

18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
1	3	10	5	2	5

Table 4. Years researching history

	Not historians/ undeclared	8–14	15–19	20–9	30–45	'forever' or '1,000,000yrs'
Total	3	7	4	5	4	3

Table 5. Feedback responses of participants

On a scale of 1–5 did you enjoy the session?	It was a nightmare	It was okay, I suppose	It was different (in a largely good way)	I had fun and learned some stuff	It's one of the best sessions I have attended at a conference
	1		3	11	11

workshop activities produced deep thought, interaction and discussion. Our prediction that these are aided by fun and creativity was confirmed.

As we explained above, the format of the workshop was designed for participants to meet and get to know each other by working together quickly rather than having any formal or icebreaker introductions. Participants' feedback highlighted the success and value of this strategy for meeting and working with others, with comments such as: 'Good way to get to work with new people'; 'Networking'; 'Good to meet scholars from other places and subfields'; 'Good – meet people in a different way'; and 'Brilliant for getting to know people at the conference.' One participant considered that we had successfully created an egalitarian space: 'It felt a very equal process that we could all contribute to.' Another comment highlighted the value of some planned-in classroom mobility; 'moving about made me think more actively about my own views'. This feedback indicates the workshop countered the passivity of the usual conference session while building a sense of connection and conference community rapidly.

Critical feedback on the workshop was generally constructive rather than negative, offering practical ideas which could be implemented in future sessions. It included suggestions such as: 'Let the AI help'; 'No hierarchy in the feedback-stickers; good or smart rather than best' and 'Fewer stickers.' One participant wanted to have more interaction with other groups so that 'we could hear more of the perspective of other groups'. Another wanted the chance to give a more detailed commentary on the different manifestos: 'Maybe if other people had been able to leave some feedback Post-its that would have been cool.' What was clearly evident in the feedback was that some groups worked together better than others and suggestions to mix up the groups were viewed as a way to enable mobility between groups.

In terms of urban history, some participants' feedback indicated that they felt the workshop did not offer enough urban history. One participant commented that there

was 'Not enough focus on subject matter of urban history, too much focus on being relevant as if we're sad s/rocks at the world party'; another suggested: 'More focus on our work, less on how we set influence.' Given the usual established format of sessions at conferences in our field, these were not unexpected responses. There was also a suggestion for 'Some action planning – big point we want to take away from the session and can all agree on.' The challenging nature of the session was reflected honestly in some feedback comments; 'I felt my concerns were slightly different from the other members of the group' and 'Co-writing was a bit chaotic – very difficult to follow at times!' On a more light-hearted note, two participants recommended 'more chocolate'!

Reflection

We were aware that the session could have taken more than one direction because many-to-many communication can be challenging and is unexpected in an academic conference. However, we felt that the workshop was successful in achieving several of our aims. Firstly, five thoughtful manifestos were produced during the session and participants accepted and gave critical feedback on them. Half an hour is not a long time to create a document with four other urban historians and (potential) strangers. While the manifestos were being produced, we did check on groups but it was quite hard to work out the dynamics of all the groups without feeling that we were disrupting the flow of the conversations. This meant that we missed some of the problems within the group dynamics and this omission featured in 'what would you have done better' section on the feedback forms. Despite this, all groups succeeded in collaborating to produce a manifesto within the tight time frame. Individuals were ready to participate in giving and receiving varying levels of positive feedback from others. The outcomes here suggest that the constraints of conference time and space should not mean that workshops cannot address big questions.

Secondly, such a workshop was a new departure for an urban history conference and a key aim was to encourage active discussion and innovative practice. The workshop demonstrated that the inclusion of an active 'doing' session in a conference programme offers a space for deep thinking, mutual exchange and peer learning as evidenced in the feedback. Participants valued the opportunity to reflect on the development of urban history, saying: 'Good to hear different perspectives on purpose and meaning of our work' and 'Good to think about the future of the discipline – good to see similarities between manifestos.' While the manifestos are valuable in themselves, none reflected the depth and richness of the conversations and work that produced them, where far more than six points were explored and evaluated. Thus, the real value of this session possibly lay more in the interaction and discussions arising around the manifestos than in the created product.

Thirdly, the hope was to build conference community and there was evidence in the feedback that the workshop helped to achieve this. Newer researchers worked alongside more experienced academics in a co-operative, equal and collaborative manner. After the session, the edited manifestos were displayed in the conference bar area for the remaining conference days where they formed a topic of conversation. We were pleased to see them revisited by their writers and discussed with other conference participants who had not been at the workshop. The 'Urban History Chartist' badges were worn and admired.

Last, but not least, as we mentioned in our introduction, we wanted people to have fun. We know that some enjoyed it more than others – it is hard to please everyone – but overall the atmosphere in the room was a positive one. There was a buzz and the mood was largely friendly and good humoured. Participants entered into the intended spirit of the session and allocated their unicorn sticker for their favourite manifesto with scholarly care!

What next?

The feedback and our own reflections suggested some ways that we could enhance this workshop design. This session was designed to model good practice in inclusive thinking and doing. We have since considered ways in which we might make group work more flexible or enable participants to 'step out' from intensive activity or discussions. Next time, we will try to pay more attention to group dynamics and have interventions prepared if we think they are not working equally well for all. Some feedback suggestions could be adopted within the same format and time scale, such as shifting from 'best' to 'smart' in the unique stickers. Other feedback could be utilized to adjust the kind of outcomes we might get; such as by changing the content of our introductory talk and our starting point questions. Some adjustments might require more time. Adding qualitative feedback between groups using 'Post-it' notes at the 'sticker' stage would require a little more time in the 'group response' stage to take feedback on board. Attempting to reach a 'workshop consensus' of any kind would need another stage with further choreography and possibly one facilitator per group.

How can this workshop format be deployed at future history conferences? Might it be possible to return to our original idea of a workshop which focuses on producing a more specific intellectual output? What kind of product could 30 historians (urban or otherwise) produce in 90 minutes if we could facilitate a co-operative space? Would shifting away from multiple outputs towards a single one introduce too many tensions? Is live real-time digital archive research possible in a workshop? How can we quickly identify spaces for historians to meet, link up and co-create? The only way to answer these questions is to try to make more conference time and space available for such innovative approaches. We also need to argue the case for conference funding to cover participating in interactive conference sessions. Another consideration is how we can find a way to include those scholars who could have made valuable contributions to the session, but were shut out because they could not afford the conference costs, or were not given visas.

We have already thought about what we would do differently if we were to run this event again. We are also actively considering how we might transfer some of the workshop activities and aspects into the digital realm to enable and expand participation beyond the conference. We suspect that an important factor in the workshop's success was that we, the authors/facilitators, are all 'insiders' in terms of the topic: we are long-established researchers in urban history, personally known to some of the people in the room and we are also experienced 'open access' tutors. How might this experiment work in an unknown community, one which did not have the same shared spatial and physical experience which we put at the heart of our process with sweets and stickers? We are interested in finding out what the outcome of a similar exercise in other areas might be; we would love to hear about other workshops.

Conclusion

The successful outcomes in the forms of the richness of the work and in producing the manifestos meant that the session achieved important aims: collaboration and co-operative working. The workshop demonstrated that when urban historians work together across generations and continents, they produce work of real value, which is resilient and sustainable.

In terms of the work undertaken in the session, all the manifestos showed the increasing value, relevance and potential of urban history for the next half century. None of the suggested charter points were unreasonable or even (with the possible exception of 'revolution') unworkable. For example, should 'all history departments have an urban historian'? Well, maybe, because how can any city-based university do without one? Several of the manifestos reflected the conference theme of globalism. In many places, globalism means increasing urbanism, putting urban history at the heart of the journey to understanding the modern world.

Many of the participants at this conference might be primarily active in other fields but also produce urban history. As Edelheim and others have argued '[e]ach and every time we attend a conference, we are simultaneously constructing our own identities as academics'.[6] Urban history conferences are thus important in maintaining ties *with* the subject area and also *within* it, so conference participation is central to the continued health of academic urban history. The manifestos produced quickly by a diverse range of scholars reveal strong common concerns and bonds between historians of the urban. Active participation, through discussion and doing urban history in an enjoyable and friendly environment with others, helps to build the urban history community.

The authors would like to thank everyone who participated in the 'Making manifestos for urban history' workshop. We set up the space and set optional prompt questions, but all the creative input was theirs. The writers of this are voting for the only point of the Peoples' Charter yet to be enacted in the UK: 'annual [urban history] parliaments'!

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[6]J.R. Edelheim, K. Thomas, K.G. Åberg and G. Phi, 'What do conferences do? What is academics' intangible return on investment (ROI) from attending an academic tourism conference?', *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 18 (2018), 94–107.