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# New contexts, new challenges: Researching Multiculture in new city spaces

Presentation at the Session on 'Migration, Mixing and Ethnic Integration' at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference, University of Manchester, 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> August 2009

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# Presentation Outline



- Introduction
- Contextualising modern multiculturalism: why research new cities?
- The research project: focus and design
- Collaborative research and the effect of 'insider status'
- Accessing communities in new cities and the role of 'gatekeepers'
- Conclusion



# Introduction



- dominant focus of academic work on issues relating to ethnicity and the possibility and challenges of multiculturalism
- recognition of the shift in Britain away from ethnically homogenous spaces to increasingly multi-ethnic ones



## **Contextualising modern multiculturalism: why research new cities?**

- Conviviality of routine multiculturalism (Gilroy, 2004)
- Pluralist, multilogical and dispersed multicultural citizenship (Modood, 2007)
- Public policy report recommendations (Parekh, 2000; the two Cattle Reports, 2001 and 2004; and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC), 2007).
- Sites of 'prosaic interaction' (Amin, 2002)



## ■ The research project: focus and design

- to investigate the ways in which multiculturally constituted communities become established in new urban spaces
- key sites of local community construction – schools and provision for young people and religious centres
- Black African communities in Milton Keynes, specifically Ghanaian and Somali residents
- Multi-method, qualitative approach – semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation and document analysis



# Collaborative research and the effect of 'insider status'



- ESRC CASE Studentships and working with Milton Keynes Council
- The effect of 'insider status' in collaborative research
- Snowball sampling and the intensity of researching public figures in micro-local contexts
- Challenges associated with new city multicultural policy making



# Accessing communities in new cities and the role of 'gatekeepers'



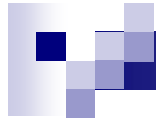
- The effects of constant growth and population change
- Migrant associations and religious centres as access points
- The proliferation of migrant associations and religious centres highlighting the newfound complexities of migrant communities and processes of engagement within new cities
- The impact of 'gatekeepers' in the research process



# Conclusion



- The Methodological challenges of researching multicultural communities within new city spaces
- Justifying the research using current theoretical debates around the ‘conviviality’ of cross-cultural interaction, ‘sites of prosaic interaction’ and contemporary multicultural citizenship
- Reflecting on the challenges of working collaborative with a local authority
- The impact of the insights and challenges associated with ‘insider status’ in collaborative research
- The complexities of accessing communities in new cities and the important and sometimes problematic role played by local ‘gatekeepers’



**Thank you for your attention**

**Any questions?**