***Explanatory note for Living Multiculture: the new geographies of ethnic diversity and the changing formations of multiculture in England.***

**Project summary**

The project asks two key questions. How do people live complex cultural difference, managing increasing cultural diversity in their everyday lives? What role does place and locality play in this process? There is growing interest as to the ways in which ethnically complex populations routinely interact in convivial and competent ways. Exploring the dynamics and limits of this competency - and its relationship to places that have long and short histories of multiculture - is at the heart of the research. In a context of dispersing multiculture the need to focus on issues of space and place is particularly important since less research has been done on suburbs, large towns and small cities with little or no histories of multiculture and/or ethnic tension. The project's core aims are to contribute to new social and spatial understandings of multiculture and to inform appropriate policy responses.

It employs a mixed qualitative methodology in three case study areas chosen for the different formations they represent as the new geographies of multiculture in England – super-diverse multiculture, suburban multiculture and newly multicultural urban spaces.

This combined methods approach combines one-to-one semi-structured interviews; repeat in-depth discussion groups and participant observation. Members of the research team that consisted of the PI, 3 CIs and 2 RAs conducted all these. Informed by psychotherapeutic approaches these methods allow the research team to observe, experience and ask about the types of social relations, convivial exchanges and quotidian skills that underpin lived multiculture.

**Data overview**

The qualitative data collection consists of a total of 138 transcripts and approximately 70 observation field notes. The data was collected between September 2012 and June 2014.

In detail the data collection =

1. A series of detailed observation field notes;

2. Individual interviews (107);

3. Group interviews (31) - these were repeat interviews with the same groups meeting three times during the course of the fieldwork.

The observations and interviews were conducted with a diverse range of participants in three geographical areas which each represent different stages of urban multiculture: super-diversity (London Borough of Hackney), newly multicultural (Milton Keynes) and suburban multiculture (Oadby, Leicestershire).

The 107 ethnically diverse participants =

(29) Young people in post-16 education institutions;

(37) Members of social-leisure organizations;

(23) Public park visitors/regular users and

(14) Locally and (4) nationally based policy actors.

The deposited data is organized into five files that each contain interview and/or field note data that work across the project's three geographical locations and relate to each of the research sites. There are three fields relating to the project’s research sites: colleges, parks and social-leisure organizations. There is one file that relates to the public site work of the project and contains field notes with data relating to observations in cafe spaces, at public festivals and events. There are two files that relate to the local and national policy realm work of the project and contain data collected through interviewing policy-making figures. There are also two further files with examples of project documents (consent forms and information sheets) and the individual and repeat group interview schedules. The latter file contains each of the interview guides used for all the individual, repeated group and policy actor interviews. See file-by-file summary below:

**Post-16 colleges file**

This contains 29 anonymised individual interview transcripts and 9 group interviews. The interviews are collected from three 6th form colleges, Uplands College in Oadby, Grafton College in Milton Keynes and Tyssen Hill in Hackney. The participants were ethnically, culturally, religiously diverse and all in 16-24 age group. There was a gender mix (indicated by explicitly female and male pseudonyms).

There is also a collection of field notes from the observation work that was done while members of the research team spent ethnographic time in the colleges.

**Parks file**

This contains 23 anonymised individual interview transcripts and 9 group interviews. The individual interviews were all conducted as ‘walking’ or ‘mobile’ interviews as the participants walked with the interviewer around the parts of the/’their’ park. The interviews are collected from three public parks, Knighton Park, Oadby, Campbell and Willan Lake Parks, Milton Keynes and Springfield Park, Hackney. The participants were ethnically, culturally, religiously mixed and covered a broad age range. There was a gender and age range overall but there were more female than male participants.

There is also a collection of field notes from the participant observation and observation work that was done while members of the research team spent ethnographic time in the parks.

**Social leisure organizations file**

This contains 37 anonymised individual interview transcripts and 12 group interviews that were collected in the project’s three geographies. There are 5 individual and 3 group interviews in the Gardeners’ Group in Milton Keynes and 5 individual and 1 group interview with the Woodside Footballers Group in Milton Keynes. There are 5 individual and 3 group interviews in the Sports Club in Oadby and 5 individual and 1 group interview with the Morning Meet Up Club in Oadby. There are 5 individual and 3 group interviews with the Running Club in Hackney and 12 individual and 1 group interview with the Creative Writing Group in Hackney. Again this was an ethnically mixed group of participants overall. The sports club and creative writing group were the most ethnically diverse. The membership of the two Milton Keynes organizations was overwhelmingly white British. The Coffee Morning Group was overwhelmingly British-Indian and the Running Club mainly white British and white Other. There is a gender imbalance (more women – gardening group, running group, coffee morning and more men – football club and a gender balance – sports club and creative writing group) and an age range across these groups.

There is also a collection of field notes from the participant observation that was done while members of the research team spent ethnographic time with each of the social leisure organizations.

**Policy interviews file**

This contains 14 individual interviews with locally based diversity policy-related actors drawn from a range of statutory and third sector organizations in each of the project’s geographies and 4 individual interview with diversity policy-related figures drawn from key organizations which operate at a national level. As these interviewees are potentially more identifiable we are unable to be more precise as to the sort of organization and professional environments in which they operate. The interviews with all the policy figures took place in the later stages of the project’s life and involved feeding back our findings to participants prior to the interview so as to part of the interview and part of the project’s dissemination/engagement strategy. There was a gender mix at the local level but at the national level the participants were all male. There was significant ethnic diversity (especially in Hackney) in this participant population at the local level but mostly white British at the national level.

**Pubic spaces file**

This file contains a series of field notes written by members of the research team and relate to ethnographies activities within each of the project’s geographies. The field notes mostly cover observation within semi-public café spaces but they also include descriptions of local celebratory public events such as festivals and park fun days.

**Two additional files** contain methods related documentation – **consent forms** and **information sheets** and the various **interview schedules.**

Further information about the project, its interim and final report and pre-published versions of journal articles based on its findings can be found on the project website: <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/living-multiculture>

and at the Open University’s online repository:

<http://www.oro.open.ac.uk/>

Details of project related, published peer journal articles are included below:

## Neal S, Mohan G, Cochrane A and Bennett K (2015) You can’t move in Hackney without bumping into an anthropologist’: why certain places attract research attention, with G. Mohan, A. Cochrane and K. Bennett *Qualitative Research* (accepted and in press)

Jones H, Neal S, Mohan G, Connell K, Cochrane A and Bennett K (2015) Urban multiculture and everyday encounters in semi-public, franchised cafe spaces, *The Sociological Review* DOI: 10.1111/1467-954X.12311.

Neal S, Bennett K, Jones H, Cochrane A and Mohan G (2015) Multiculture and public parks: researching super-diversity and attachment in public green space, *Population, Space and Place*, Vol. 21, Issue 5: 463-475.

Neal S, Bennett K, Cochrane A and Mohan G (2013) Living multiculture: understanding the new spatial and social relations of ethnicity and multiculture in England, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* Issue 2: 308-323.