

Project title: Migrant identification and incorporation: Kenyan Pentecostals between home, London, and the Kingdom of God

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Project Information Sheet For Potential Participants

Project description

The project looks at how African Christians in London live their lives and develop meaningful communities outside of their home countries. Many Africans are religious people, and the church is very important to them, whether in London or Africa. They have founded many churches in London, which contribute to the life of the city in diverse ways. Churches are places to receive spiritual and moral guidance and support. They also offer spaces to socialise among other Christians. African Christians and the churches they attend can be seen as helping to reinvigorate Christianity in the UK. The project focuses on churches founded by African Christians and their congregants in London. On one hand, it is interested in how congregants come to be members of particular churches and how the church helps them deal with challenges, for example, related to employment, family relations, health, and legal issues. On the other hand, the project is interested in the stories of the churches' establishment, their services and activities, and their engagement with local councils, residents and religious and community organisations where they are located.

Why the project is important

Churches often play an important role in building communities. While the British government is keen to partner with faith organisations like the churches African Christians attend, these churches are not always welcomed or understood by local councils and other residents. The media has contributed to a mixed image of Black and migrant churches. The project seeks to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the communities African Christians have created in London, the place of churches in their lives, and churches' contributions to the wider society, for example, through providing spiritual and social support and models of success.

How the project will be conducted, and who should participate and why

The research will be conducted among African Christians in London, in particular those who migrated from Kenya, and in the churches they attend. Research methods will include conversations and interviews with congregants and their families and pastors. Interviews, where appropriate, will be based on a set of open-ended questions; hand-written notes may be taken during conversations. Information will be handled confidentially and sensitively, and participants will always remain anonymous. I will also attend church services and activities and other social gatherings, as well as review material (e.g. books, pamphlets, websites, and videos) produced by the churches. Ideal participants include African Christians from Kenya of any age and background who attend or lead churches in London and who would like to share their views on the role of religion in their lives and the work of their church in the community.

Aims of the project and its limitations

The project is intended to contribute to academic discussions on the subject of religion and migration. In addition, it aims to engage with policy discussions in the UK regarding the role of Black and migrant churches in British society. While the project is based at Oxford University, participants will not be affiliated with or have access to the University.

This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of the UK. It has been reviewed and approved by the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/introduction/>). You can contact them at: curec@admin.ox.ac.uk



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