

An Example Detailed Research Proposal

Super-diverse Streets: Economies and spaces of urban migration in UK Cities

The 'Super-diverse Streets' project is a multidisciplinary, comparative analysis of 'super-diverse' high streets that aims to explore how urban retail economies and spaces are shaped by and shape migrant entrepreneurial practices. The project focuses on five high streets within the UK's most diverse cities, including London, Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham and Bradford. The overarching objective is to define and analyse the 'super-diverse' high street as a complex urban assemblage: to explore connections between the diverse origins and networks of the shop proprietors; their range of retail activities and practices; and the spatial infrastructure that supports and is altered by their endeavours. In developing a comparative evidence base, the research aims to input into policy on high street futures, and to contribute more broadly to understanding how migration transforms our streets and cities.

Ethical Considerations

The research will involve human participants, commencing with a face-to-face/ door-to-door survey of the proprietors of each of the streets. Focus group workshops will be held with local authority officers and members, and trade associations and relevant local organisations associated with each street. I will explain, in appropriate detail, what the research is about to participants. Every research participant will be given a one-page 'project information sheet' that outlines the purpose of the study, who is undertaking the study, and how it will be disseminated and used.

The project information sheet will include contact information should participants require additional information or wish to retract information or withdraw participation at any point and will also explain how anonymity and confidentiality is afforded. Where necessary, the project information sheet will be translated, although it is anticipated that English will be the lingua franca. Participation in the research will be voluntary, and informed consent will be discussed with all participants. However, it is anticipated, particularly in the street surveys, that verbal as opposed to signed consent, will be more readily obtainable.

The first stage of data collection involves a socio-economic and spatial survey of a multi-ethnic street in each respective city. Each shop unit is given a tracking code to relate the GIS spatial position to the survey material. Personal identifiers are removed and the anonymity of participants will be secured through both research unit codes and pseudonyms. The raw data of each street survey will be collated in password protected computers and accessed by the principal investigator and the two research assistants. The data will then be systematised and stored in two password-protected external storage drives, since the digital and visual data generates large storage requirements. Storage drives will be stored in the secure office of the principal investigator.

The second stage of data collection involves focus group workshops related to two of the selected streets. The workshops will be arranged with respective local authorities, traders and local organisations to understand how these streets are organized, managed and imagined. For this stage of research I will work alongside 'Social Life', a social enterprise created by the Young Foundation. We will establish a specific ethics protocol for this stage of research, drawing on Social Life's extensive expertise in working with local authorities, community organisations and frontline agencies, and submitting the protocol for review to the Research Ethics Committee. Time has been allocated prior to the workshops, to meet with relevant authorities and associations to develop appropriate workshop forums, and to review approaches to participation, confidentiality and dissemination. Feedback on workshop findings will be offered to local authorities and associations through a summary report. More generally, participants will be able to view project information and findings on the 'Superdiverse streets' online project pages.