

Institution: University of Roehampton		
Unit of Assessment: 31 - Theology and Religious Studies		
Title of case study: Addressing the Spatial Needs of Black Majority Churches in the United Kingdom		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Andrew Rogers	Principal Lecturer in Practical Theology (AR)	September 2009-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Dr Andrew Rogers' research addresses the belief and practice of Black Majority Churches (BMCs) in the UK. The growth of BMCs has not been matched by a corresponding awareness in UK public institutions of their needs, contributions and concerns. Rogers' research has directly addressed the implications of this awareness deficit through investigating BMC spatial needs and engaging directly with faith groups, government and planning professionals to create new networks and find innovative ways to involve religious minorities in public planning by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. informing policy and shaping the practice of government in London and Scotland, of planning professionals across Europe, and of new research projects being undertaken by religious policy institutes; and ii. inspiring the creative practice of a photographic artist whose work was exhibited by the Tate Modern in two photographic exhibitions, attended by 2,500 members of the public, which were themselves commissioned in response to the research. 		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>ogers has undertaken research into the spatial engagement of BMCs in London through three funded research projects. The public practical theology project, <i>Being Built Together</i> (G1) analysed how 38 BMCs in the London Borough of Southwark engaged with the planning policy and practice of local government, as well as offering accounts of their demographics and ecclesiology. The project's original aim was to generate an account of new black congregations in Southwark, with regard to demographics and ecclesiology. The resultant report provided a snapshot of the wide variety and huge number of churches that are being built in Southwark, and how issues of availability and provision of buildings for prayer, worship and community service proved challenging for these groups, causing them to repurpose old structures and often put them to multipurpose use. Key findings included the recognition of Southwark as having the highest concentration of diaspora African congregations in the world at the time, and the influence of the planning system on BMC ecclesiology along with 16 corresponding recommendations for revised policy and practice to redress the lack of positive planning for BMCs by government at all levels, packaged into a report, <i>Being Built Together: Final Report (IMP1)</i> in 2013.</p> <p>Two further funded projects developed the key research insights of <i>Being Built Together</i>, publishing them in rigorous academic fora. The AHRC <i>Faith and Place network</i> (G2) addressed critical issues around UK diaspora faith groups (including BMCs), places of worship and the planning system, leading to the publication of a policy briefing with 15 recommendations for planners, policymakers and all faith groups, across England and Wales. The <i>Religious Meeting Places</i> project (G3) had a particular focus on long-term demographic projections for diaspora faith groups (including BMCs) in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, finding that government needs to plan far ahead for their significant spatial needs.</p> <p>Research published by Rogers (R1, R2) built on the findings of <i>Being Built Together</i> (G1), incorporating them into a larger research project. Rogers' research argues that London has experienced a complex form of desecularisation (R1, R2) but through examining the demographics and growth of BMCs it contextualises paradoxical Borough-level BMC growth within the wider London and national context of church decline. Considering BMC growth factors such</p>		

as ecclesiological distinctiveness, ethnic minority demographics, geographical location and marketplace clustering effect, he argues that the predominant church decline narrative needs to become more nuanced and complex, given the paradoxical and multi-layered reality on the ground.

The influence of the planning system on BMCs is examined in detail in Rogers' article 'Lived Theologies of Place: Finding a Home in the City' (R3). Drawing on the thinking of Michel de Certeau and the idea of 'lived theology', this research demonstrates how the planning system influences BMC beliefs and practices through the interplay of particular strategies and tactics. BMCs' tactical responses to the scarcity of suitable premises and associated planning constraints have involved significant repurposing of the space that is available, making creative use of the 'unsuitable' and thus shaping the churches' theologies of place. Constraints on 'noise' have influenced the style of worship and strategic notions of the local have seen tactical changes to BMC practices of community engagement. Rogers' research demonstrates that place is a crucial nexus for understanding lived theologies, and that its contestation of place reveals the significance of power(lessness) for the same.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1** Rogers, A. (2018). Walking Down the Old Kent Road: New Black Majority Churches in a London Borough, in J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, A. Fröchtling and A. Kunz-Lübcke (eds.), *Babel is Everywhere! Migrant Readings From Africa, Europe and Asia*, (Studies in Intercultural History of Christianity), Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp.199-214. ISBN 9783631632833.
- R2** Rogers, A. (2018). Walking Down the Old Kent Road: New Black Majority Churches in the London Borough of Southwark, in D. Goodhew and A-P Cooper (eds.), *Desecularisation of the City: London's Churches, 1980 to the Present*, (Routledge Studies in Religion), London: Routledge, pp.86-104. ISBN 9780367585587.
- R3** Rogers, A. (2019). Lived Theologies of Place: Finding a Home in the City, in *Ecclesial Practices*, 6(2), pp.125-146. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-00602004>.
- G1** *Being Built Together* (PI, 2011-13, £30,000), largest funders being Southwark Council, Anglican Diocese of Southwark, Southlands Methodist Trust and the Metropolitan Police, <https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/humanities/being-built-together/>.
- G2** AHRC *Faith and Place network* (PI, 2014-16, £40,000) <https://faithandplacenetworg.org/>
- G3** *Religious Meeting Places* (consultant, 2016-17, £60,000), London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Faith-groups-and-meeting-places-evidence-base-study.pdf>.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

i. Informing policy and shaping the practice of government, planning professionals and policy institutes

After Rogers completed the *Being Built Together* project (G1) he founded and led the *Faith and Place network* (G2) between 2014 and 2016. The network was established to explore issues at the interface of faith, place and planning for minority faith groups in England and Wales with the specific objective of informing policy through engagement with policymakers at the local, regional and national governmental levels. The network brought together 70 members including 12 faith group representatives, academics from multiple disciplines, planners, policy makers, local and national government representatives and civil society organisations for the first time. As a result of this group's work, and building on the *Being Built Together: Final Report (IMP1)*, Rogers co-authored *Faith Groups and the Planning System: A Policy Briefing (IMP2)*. This briefing was provided to 363 local planning authorities in England and Wales.

The policy briefing (IMP2) informed changes to the public planning documents of local governments, laying the groundwork for material changes to planning for religious groups. For example, Barking and Dagenham Council commissioned a study of future religious spatial needs in the borough to 2050 (funded by G3) which incorporated Rogers' recommendation for the provision of facilities suitable for use by faith groups. This study, informed by Rogers' research, is now included in the Council's evidence base to support the development of the *Local Plan*

(IMP3). The Scottish government cited the briefing (IMP2) in the 'Religion and Belief' section of the ***Equality Impact Assessment on the Planning (Scotland) Bill***, describing the document as '*the main evidence of the planning issues under this characteristic*' (IMP4).

Rogers' briefing document (IMP2) has also been taken up by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), the UK's leading planning body for spatial, sustainable and inclusive planning, with over 23,000 members, which cited the briefing in evidence to a Department of Communities and Local Government Select Committee on issues relating to '*the protection afforded institutional land use currently as a means for helping faith groups*'. The RTPI's evidence concluded that '*numerous faith groups can be in cities and... the need to cater for new groups emerging is essential*' (IMP5) and the RTPI's Head of Policy Practice further testified to the awareness of new ways of working raised by Rogers' briefing, including the necessity of engaging directly with faith communities '*to put our needs as professionals*' to them. Rogers' research is already influencing the work that RTPI members currently do '*with partners on the future of the high street and town centres. It is increasingly clear that town centres need to diversify from retail use and faith use would be a very suitable one... mean[ing] that faith uses are increasingly suitably located in places easy to reach by sustainable modes of transport*' (IMP6).

Rogers' research has provided an example to other projects by policy institutes, which have subsequently undertaken research into the relationship between faith groups and public planning professionals. For example, Theos, a think tank which aims to reframe discussions about faith groups in the public eye, published a report on Religious London that acknowledged Rogers' research as an inspiration for the project. As they observe, '*In 2019, this work was a key resource for our research project 'Religious London'*' (<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2019/02/19/religious-london>). In particular, Theos attribute Rogers' research with their greater awareness of '*the multiplication of diaspora congregations in particular areas*' and '*issues around building use... and the urgent need for attention from public authorities to the need for more worshipping spaces in light of demographic trends*'. Based on this greater awareness, the researchers opted to further explore these themes through a set of interviews in area-based case studies, causing them to highlight the need for the development of community infrastructure, including worshipping space, in their report. The report was publicised in major news media outlets, including *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Times* (IMP7).

ii. Inspiring cultural organisations and creative practice

Rogers' report (G1) inspired Tate Modern to commission a publication and photographic exhibition about BMCs in Southwark in 2014. As Rogers found, in 2014 there were more than 240 BMCs in Southwark, all acting not just as spaces of faith, but also as sources of advice on health, relationships, and law and order. The Tate Modern Curator who commissioned the exhibition commented, '*Both Chloe Dewe Mathews, the artist we had commissioned, and I had read "Being Built Together" [IMP1] and were very inspired to learn of the findings and information that has been gathered as part of the report - in particular we were inspired by your findings about the volume of new black majority churches in Southwark*' (IMP8). In response to this finding, a photographic artist explored these new forms of church life and the reinvention of former industrial spaces in an exhibition commissioned by Tate Modern called 'Sunday Service', which ran free of charge from 28 May to 13 July 2014 and was attended by 2,000 members of the public. The research also provided '*a launching point*' for the 2014 edition of *Tate Modern and You*, a publication that is regularly produced in partnership with a neighbourhood or section of the local community, in collaboration with an artist, aiming to make stronger links with different communities across Southwark and Lambeth boroughs. 1,000 copies of the 2014 edition were circulated. Following the success of 'Sunday Service', the exhibition was subsequently followed up by a video installation called 'Congregation' at Bosse & Baum, an art gallery in Peckham, which ran from 29 May to 21 June 2015 and attended by 500 members of the public. Rogers' research was cited as an inspiration for the research on both exhibition webpages (IMP9). The photographic artist further observed that Rogers' research '*gave me a framework to consider and, through my art, document how the spaces in which these Black Majority Churches are not just places of worship, but also sites at which health, relationship and legal advice are ordered*' (IMP10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- IMP1** Rogers, A. (2013). *Being Built Together: Final Report*, London: University of Roehampton. Available at: https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/globalassets/documents/humanities/being20built20together_sb203-7-13.pdf.
- IMP2** Rogers, A. and G. Richard, *Faith Groups and the Planning System: Policy Briefing* (2015). <https://faithandplacenetworg/download/download-briefing/>
- IMP3** London Borough of Barking and Dagenham *Local Plan review* (2018). Cites *Faith Groups and the Planning System* (page 100). Available at: [http://lucmaps.com/HubComponents/10589/LBD%20Local%20Plan%20Reg%2019%20Consultation%20Document%20Sep%202020%20\(Redsize%20V1\).pdf](http://lucmaps.com/HubComponents/10589/LBD%20Local%20Plan%20Reg%2019%20Consultation%20Document%20Sep%202020%20(Redsize%20V1).pdf)
- IMP4** *Scottish Government, Planning Bill - Equality Impact Assessment* (2017). Cites *Faith Groups and the Planning System* (page 4). Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/correspondence/2017/01/planningbill-equality-impact-assessment/documents/7a40bdd0-9adf-4d84-b52f-d5120f9d188d/7a40bdd0-9adf-4d84-b52f-d5120f9d188d/govscot%3Adocument>.
- IMP5** Department for Communities and Local Government Select Committee, *Written Evidence submitted by the RTPI*. Cites *Faith Groups and the Planning System* (2016) Cites *Faith Groups and the Planning System* (paragraph 9). Available at: http://data.parliament.uk/WrittenEvidence/CommitteeEvidence.svc/EvidenceDocument/Communities%20and%20Local%20Government/DCLGs%20consultation%20on%20National%20Planning%20Policy/written/27343.html#_ftn5.
- IMP6** Testimonial from the Head of Policy Practice & Research for the Royal Town Planning Institute dated March 2020 discussing how Rogers' recommendations inform the work of their 23,000 members across Europe.
- IMP7** Testimonial from Theos dated 14 January 2021, showing how Rogers' research provided a model for their own project on faith groups. Available at: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/Religious-London-FINAL-REPORT-24.06.2020.pdf>.
- IMP8** Testimonial from exhibition commissioner at Tate Modern dated 8 December 2020, illustrating the role of **R1** in the formation of the two exhibitions *Sunday Service* and *Congregation*.
- IMP9** Websites for *Sunday Service* and *Congregation*. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/tate-modern-and-you-sunday-service> and <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/projects/tate-modern-project/tate-modern-community-past-projects/congregation-chloe-dewe>.
- IMP10** Testimonial from photographic artist behind *Sunday Service* and *Congregation* dated 25 February 2020, demonstrating that **R1** provided a framework for her to respond to with her art.