

Memory Travels: Death, Belonging and Architecture

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the tension and cooperation between politics of conformity and difference that are embedded in urban spaces, such as burials and mosques in Britain and beyond. It examines the social, political and cultural ideologies and complexities of the historical past and present by focussing on death, belonging and architecture. It will show that the past has become re-imagined and embedded into the postcolonial concrete present. Thereby, carving out new national traditions and memories that travel through time and space. The study suggests that urban space, although often ignored is important not only for our everyday consciousness and social realities, but is pivotal to examine and study especially in relation to national policies, such as “multiculturalism”.

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Introduction

There have been many studies, as Lila Abu Lughoud reminds one, which have tried to understand “Muslims” and the religion of Islam from behind the ‘veil’. This thesis will do no such thing; it will however examine the complexities behind urban space. Urban spaces are a part of our everyday realities, yet they are often the last place many individuals turn to when examining or studying the policy of “multiculturalism”. I will examine the ignored urban spaces as a way to show one that the historical memories of the colonial past are embedded in the postcolonial present, especially contested spaces, such as burials and mosques in Britain and beyond. The thesis will examine the tension and cooperation between the politics of conformity and difference to show one that though each is haunted by its other side the “(post)colonial ambivalent” of both structures which underlie British multiculturalism, has nevertheless opened up a space for members of the British Muslims to construct their own identities and legitimacy within the boundaries of multiculturalism.

The “public” identity construction of “British Muslims” through urban space is a complexity that needs to be urgently explored, for such monolithic representations are far from simple. Many individuals are uncomfortable with such monolithic representations and this is clearly visible in “private” spaces; however, in public such categories seem to have become an embedded ‘myth’. For example, “it is all very well for historians of religion to think, speak and write about Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism, but they rarely pause to consider if such clear cut categories actually found expression in the consciousness, action and cultural performances of the human actors they describe” (Oberoi 1994, 1). These clear-cut categories have become a strategy for some members of the British Muslims to utilize as a hegemonic and “monolithic” group that deserves public recognition and legal inclusion in Britain. Urban spaces reveal many ideologies of conformity and difference between British Muslims and non-Muslims, each holding on to forms of belonging and change through “tradition” and “modernity”. Many “communities” have their own versions of tradition and modernity, which is why the politics of

conformity and difference become even more complex through urban space. Therefore, dismantling the ideologies that they carry within their silent, yet contested spaces becomes a project worth pursuing.

In linking urban space with the historical past and present day issues of identity the thesis aims to accomplish two main purposes. The first aim is to examine the socio-political, historical and cultural ideologies that are attached to concrete space, such as burial grounds and mosques. The spatial and temporal meanings embedded in urban space are important, especially for the study of “multiculturalism”, which often ignores the important values and ideologies that urban space carries in the everyday consciousness of social realities. The second aim is to show the tension and cooperation between the politics of conformity and difference through different concrete spaces, both in the British Empire and the postcolonial present. Thus, such contested spaces reveal how various ambiguities have become ideologically embedded in urban spaces, both concrete and online.

I have constructed these issues with the following questions in mind. These questions can be used as our critical tools of reflection, which can help navigate one’s understanding of identity formations and legitimacy in relation to conformity and difference through the British Empire and the present day ‘policy’ of multiculturalism. (1) There is a great deal of social engineering involved in keeping national identity myths alive, is it then possible to dismantle artificial myths through urban space? (2) If the policy of multiculturalism is emended, will urban spaces such as burials and mosques undergo a transformation through urban change that will reflect the new national politics, thereby becoming new resources of the state? (3) Are solutions achieved in other areas of the world in relation to concrete space and national policies, capable of working in Britain? Lastly, (4) Multiculturalism is trying to solve many urban problems that exist between various different groups; however, the problem of group tension was part of the

colonial past and therefore aspects of this ‘colonial mentality’ are re-surfacing in the present. So, are the urban conflicts of the past becoming re-imagined in the postcolonial present?

The case studies are important for understanding the larger puzzle of conformity and difference that were historically embedded in the Empire and are now embedded in multiculturalism. Chapter one on burial politics will focus primarily on the politics of conformity as a way to investigate the many ideological meanings that have become embedded in the ignored reality of social forms of death and belonging within concrete space. This case study is important for it shows the various levels of conformity that have become re-imagined and embedded in a new ‘homogenous time’. Chapter two on the Markaz mosque will focus more on the structure of difference. This case study is important for it reveals that though the past is embedded in it’s contested space, the built structure is nonetheless trying to capture a place of belonging with a new time and space, one that is both homogenous and different. The Markaz mosque is thus an enigmatic case for it offers both aspects of “tradition” and “modernity” that are rooted in a historical and present day consciousness. These two case studies are important because they both show how urban spaces occupy a central framework over issues of belonging, identity, and memory. Therefore, if in Britain and other parts of the world there is an attempt to understand policies of “multiculturalism” or “pluralism” they must take into account the tensions inherent in national identity construction through concrete space as well as online space, which gives reality to the contested spaces.

All That Is Solid Melts Into Air

The project or ‘policy’ of multiculturalism has come under great scrutiny by members of the “imagined community” who have invested many forms of ‘invented traditions’ within such a framework; therefore Karl Marx’s statement, “all that is solid melts into air” seems to be the present day condition of the policy. Multiculturalism was embedded in Britain in the nineteen-seventies and underlying the policy is conformity and difference, which seem to produce a rather

complex political reality. According to Tariq Modood, “multiculturalism can be defined as the challenging, the dismantling, the remaking of public identities in order to achieve an equality of citizenship that is neither merely individualistic nor premised on assimilation” (2005, 5). If this definition is taken seriously, urban spaces are vital for creating an equality of citizenship.

National identification through multiculturalism requires a critical investigation, for the equality of citizenship cannot be achieved without interrogating urban space. Eric Hobsbawm stated, “national identification and what it is believed to imply, can change and shift in time, even in the course of quite short periods. In my judgement this is the area of national studies in which thinking and research are most urgently needed” (1993, 11). Hobsbawm is quite right, but one must then question the ways in which urban spaces have changed or remained the same. Once the questioning begins then one may begin to see spaces such as burials and mosques as occupying a political voice, which for many years has remained powerfully silent. Many urban spaces are either taken for granted, forgotten or changed to suit the power interests of many who utilize concrete space because of the promises of recognition made by multiculturalism. Thus, the politics of recognition and assimilation embedded within the policy are the roots of many agonizing relations, which are producing unequal relations. The past also exhibited forms of conformity and difference; therefore, gaining a vision into the past will help us understand the present day realities of the symbolic political realities embedded within the contestation of space and the state of flux over multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism needs to be emended for the urban problems that exist are clear symbols of its fragility. If multiculturalism is emended, it must be done consciously; for the religious space that has been constructed for many British Muslims who have found legitimacy through it should not be completely dismantled or closed. For, if that were to occur then the tension of the past would be reproduced resulting in an agonizing national awakening. Tariq Modood, questioned in his course syllabus (2008) “has multiculturalism failed? If so, why should it be

given a second chance?” Multiculturalism has not completely ‘failed’. If it did then its presence would not be adopted in other nations. However, multiculturalism needs to be constantly challenged because it would be absurd to think that one policy would not require any form of transformation over time; especially since as members of this multicentric world we engage in many changes in our everyday national spaces. Also, one may argue that pluralism offers us a solution for acknowledging our diversity through shared common goods and values, which recognizes differences and levels of conformity as an integral part of society. However, pluralism is not short of complexities, for it comes with many ‘politics of inequality’ such as, cultural relativism. I am conscious of the “pluralism project” being carried out by Harvard University that suggests cultural relativism is a ‘myth’ of pluralism; nonetheless, the concern is still valid and certainly not a myth. Pluralism, although important is not the main focus of this thesis, but one must be conscious of it while reflecting on the ‘multicultural crisis’.

The Agony over Identity

The Salman Rushdie affair highlighted the awakening of a Muslim identity and it showed for the first time the ways in which multiculturalism was politically unstable. The nation was faced with a real danger because of the conflicting majority and minority politics that revolved around ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, which entered the postcolonial stage for the first time. At this moment it is important for one to grasp that modernity is just a *concept* and it can be thought of in relation to ‘secular’ individuals; whereas tradition can be thought of in relation to ‘traditional’ individuals, who may be imagined as fearing the modernity that ‘secular’ individuals embrace. Thus, the affair demonstrated that many traditional British Muslims felt invisible from the national imagination of Britain, despite multiculturalism flouting in the air.

The affair highlighted the ways in which British Muslims were gaining their voice and recognition through their once politically silent identities. During the time period from the early-late nineteen-eighties, many ‘British South Asian Muslims’ were facing hardships of

unemployment because of Britain's changing economy. Also, neighbouring 'South Asians', such as the Sikhs and Hindus in Bradford were doing considerably well both in terms of education and employment (Mahony, 2001). Hence, this was a marker of tension they faced as a 'politically weak' group and many used this to claim access over recognition and this 'legal gift' of recognition was promised by multiculturalism. Urban space was then used as a political project both by the nation-state and certain 'traditional' individuals who found a spot within multiculturalism to legitimize their political voice through the creation of fragile identities. Thus, the project of difference seems to have been achieved, at least through urban space. Perhaps, this is one reason why many non-Muslims are expressing claims over historical space as a way to monitor levels of identity construction that the British Muslims have gained through recognition politics.

The reason why the affair is important to reflect upon is that it was the first public incident that demonstrated the reasons why traditional Muslims were hurt from 'national exclusion'. Many individuals protested that they were hurt over issues of assimilation, particularly naming. Salman Rushdie was considered by many 'traditional British Muslims' to be outside their inner group boundaries thus, the indirect linkage that he made to the prophet Mohammed in his text "The Satanic Verses" was perceived as a personal attack to their religiosity and psychological realities (Appignanesi and Maitland, 1989). Although Rushdie claimed the character Mahound could not sound or read as Mohammed; if many individuals had their names butchered in the public realm for the sake of assimilation how different would Mahound in 'reality' sound from Mohammed? Many names both of individuals and buildings are taken directly from the Qur'an. Thus, Rushdie's power to give the prophet a new identity in public, regardless of the fact that the book was part of 'magic realism' served as a mirror image to their own loss of identity. Hence, instead of pushing for their first names to be recognized, individuals pushed for public recognition of the prophet's name as positive and different. This

created a push for them to change their 'Asian' name into a 'Muslim' one, which was applied to all Muslims, whether they agreed over the Rushdie affair or not.

Due to the Rushdie affair many British Muslims expressed levels of conformity and difference both with "long-distance nationalism" and with "local" space. Talal Asad stated, "it's not that ones own pain can never be convincingly conveyed to others, but that *when* one feels the urgent need to communicate ones pain, and the communication fails, *then* it may come to be thought of-with added anguish as unshareable" (2003, 82). Therefore, individuals invested in a new relationship both with 'local' and 'global' Muslims, because of the loss of belonging to the imagined community that shunned them through the national newspaper spaces and through artificially constructed group identities. The issue of naming and assimilation may become a central concern for the future and it is especially important to pay attention to in relation to the Markaz Mosque. For this mosque is also undergoing name-calling through "local" and "long-distance nationalism". The names it has been given have been the 'Mega mosque' and 'monster mosque', neither of which is reflective of the actual hybrid names of the future built space.

The Race Relations Act of Britain, included ethnicity as a component of discrimination rather than religion therefore, Muslims began to understand how they were painfully left out by the legality of Britain during the affair. For example, Sikhs and Jews were considered 'culturally unique' because according to this act they constituted an 'ethnic group', whereas Muslims were not considered an ethnic group (Modood, 2005). The act was revised in the year 2000, however showing clear signs that the politics of recognition and difference was something that Muslims had to understand in order to enter as players in the game of multiculturalism. As a result of the Rushdie affair, many South Asian Muslims organized themselves through strategic voting patterns, residential segregation and protest movements. Forms of these differences are at the height of anxiety in present-day Britain, resulting in both fears over assimilation and the 'Islamization of space'.

Literature Review

Many great thinkers, who have shaped my knowledge on the politics of nationalism, the nation-state and the contestation of space have enriched this thesis. However, many studies have shown that there is still much left to investigate. I hope therefore to contribute to the rich literature that has been produced on nationalism, urban space, multiculturalism, and identity construction.

Thus, it is important to begin this section with the following quote, “A list of references is a set of thank-you notes. It is our way of acknowledging that, without the people whom we reference, we could not have done the work we did”(Shulman 1999, 15).

Nationalism-the project continues

This thesis has theorized around the rich work produced by Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and Abidin Kusno. Eric Hobsbawm’s work, 1993, was an incredibly insightful study on how the nation and nationalism are interconnected in producing a very consciously political project that reinforces differences and spatial conformity in public and private spaces. He has worked with the definition provided by Ernest Gellner on nationalism and as such so does this thesis, “primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit be congruent” (Hobsbawm 1993, 9). Hobsbawm’s work, 1997, on ‘invented traditions’ shaped my understanding on present day national inventions considerably. Therefore, I will use his ideas to describe new traditions and myths that have become invented amongst the imagined community.

The work that has shaped my understanding on the ‘old’ and ‘new’ formations of nationalism in the “imagined community” both online and off has been Benedict Anderson, 1991. He suggested that nations were imagined into existence, not produced through language or ‘race’. However, it is important to clarify that his study was limited to newspapers, rather than on urban space. And, Anderson’s work, 1998, especially his chapter on “long-distance nationalism” was pivotal for this study. He helped show how both the past and present were still

engaged in transnational links that gave rise to various levels of national politics and identity construction.

Urban spaces are often ignored as areas to investigate, but they clearly are vastly important for understanding many levels of ideological complexity and Abidin Kusno provided this enriched understanding. His work 2000 and 2003 examined how national spaces were imagined into existence through urban spaces and architecture. Thereby, showing the ways in which concrete spaces, especially in cities are critical to investigate in order to produce wider forms of understanding methods of social change. Thus, I will explore the city spaces through mosques and cemeteries as a way to understand various social meanings invested into such concrete forms. All three individuals were fairly important for this thesis as they showed how the nation and nationalism has gained a much stronger force in present day. I will attempt to add to the work on nationalism as it keeps getting stronger, especially through the construction of identity politics in urban space.

Conformity and Difference

Both conformity and difference, each haunted by its other side have shown that the divergence that exists between them has created many forms of global agonies and complexities. C.A. Bayly, 2004, examines the growth of global uniformities in the “modern world” through structures such as the state, religion, and bodily practices. Although he recognizes that these connections could also create difference to a great degree, he nonetheless shows how our interconnections cannot be forgotten. I will examine how conformity, not uniformity, was pushed and pulled in various directions to produce long distance interconnections. Through these interconnections differences were strengthened, especially through urban space, which I will explore through nationalism and the contestation of space.

The study of “multiculturalism” cannot be examined without taking into account the contestation over identity and belonging through urban space. Multiculturalism is quite a

complex national policy and as such the work carried out by Tariq Modood has been quite helpful in examining the ways in which conformity and difference are a strong element in the policy. Modood has written many texts on this subject, especially in relation to 'British Asians' or 'Muslims' and therefore I have often relied on his analysis of the policy. I am aware of the many other individuals who are multiculturalism 'specialists' such as, Will Kymlica. Nonetheless, my focus is limited to Modood's analysis of the policy and perhaps that is also one of my limitations.

As I engaged with an understanding of the politics of conformity and difference, it seemed that many studies were often battling with either the conformity side or the side of difference. Thus, this study will take their insights and examine both conformity and difference by bringing them together in relation to multiculturalism. Edward Said's, 1979, work on Orientalism shaped my understanding on difference considerably. However, it also left me somewhat blind to the ways in which 'we' are interconnected, despite the very project of orientalism. Mark Crinson, 1996, helped in my understanding of the various other forms and processes of both conformity and difference through architecture, that Said brushed aside.

Modernity and tradition are also part of the puzzle of conformity and difference therefore, they are important to explore. Jurgen Habermas, 1987, argues that modernity needs to be re-applied through a revised understanding of reason. He believes this can be done through communicative action in which the 'ordinary' communication of the 'everyday language' of individuals would greatly enhance understanding, respect and recognition in the public sphere. This is what he believes would expand the unfinished project of modernity. However, one wonders how it would become possible for communicative action to work in the public realm if reason was still linked to the enlightenment project of the past. Also, communicative rationality and action alone cannot solve problems that exist in civil society, for one cannot simply ignore the everyday practices of visibility through urban space(s), architecture, and so forth. This realm

of what I would call 'invisible communication' is often silent, but would generate the same process of understanding in the public realm.

The project of modernity from what I have learned in one of my classes, is just a concept, thus it will be examined as such throughout this thesis. However, Marshall Berman, 1988, provides one with a beautiful description on the project of modernity. He writes, "To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world-and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are" (18). This provides an accurate description on reasons why individuals are holding on to spaces, such as burials. For modernity such as, urbanization threatens individual's sense of belonging, thus 'tradition' becomes something individuals can hold on to. However, many British Muslims who hold on to forms of the past through religion are labelled as "traditional", but at the same time they are "modern", for they are engaging in a new form of modernity by recapturing and changing notions of belonging through urban space. At the same time many non-Muslim individuals are holding on to a historical belonging therefore also engaging in "traditional" behaviour, which for some reason is thought of as "modern". This is what will be examined through the politics of conformity and difference in various geo-political spaces.

Cross-comparisons and new contributions

There have been many studies that have carried out rich analysis on the understanding of the contestation of space and the richness of 'British Muslims' socio-cultural experience. However, many studies through my gaze have not lived up to the reality of producing 'careful' knowledge and as such the studies that have been the closest for cross comparisons and insights have both offered their richness and limitations. This study may help find a way to offer urban spaces a chance to produce further understanding.

The work that provided a fascinating mirror into the past was Joseph Salter, 1873. The obvious limit to this text was that he was a strong ‘missionary orientalist’ that chose to represent the gaze of the nation, whilst representing the ‘Asiatics’ in England. I will show one that though Salter tried to represent the plight of the ‘poor Asiatics’ he often showed that the ‘Asiatics’ despite their poor conditions formed rich levels of interconnections, which helped them claim urban space as a group of ‘family’ and friends.

The investigation of burial spaces as a political reality could not have been fully understood without the work carried out by Brenda Yeoh, 2003. She suggested that the spatial politics of burials are an important area for ‘national’ investigation. Brenda Yeoh and Tan Boon Hui’s study 2006, examined the struggles over urbanization and development both in the colonial and postcolonial space of Singapore. Both studies were interesting to examine in relation to the contestation over burial spaces. However, Yeoh’s focus was often limited to Singapore therefore, I will attempt to compare different colonial spaces as a way to gain a larger understanding towards patterns of conformity through the British Empire and nation-state.

The research that has been closest to my study has showed both a rich understanding and a need to revisit issues of ‘careful’ understanding. Humayun Ansari, 2007, shaped my knowledge on the British Muslim burial complexity considerably, yet he does not focus his attention on burial spaces outside of London and this is something that I will focus on. The memories of the colonies also hold burial memories, therefore comparing and contrasting different spaces, provides one with a richer understanding of complexity both macroscopically and microscopically. The work by Katy Gardner, 1998, reflected the need for more ‘careful’ work to be completed that would focus on ‘death and burial’ amongst individuals in present day. Fortunately, Ansari’s work came at a perfect time for me to examine.

There have been many studies on the politics of mosques and other controversial spaces and the case study examining the Markaz mosque will therefore add to the existent literature.

However, its contribution will be by examining the mosque, as a ‘community project’ and as a space of agony. The study carried out by John Eade, 1996, was rather interesting as it examined the contestations over historical mosques in East London. However, his study was focussed mostly on Bangladeshi Muslims in Tower Hamlets. Although he examines the presence of Pakistani Muslims in West London he doesn’t focus any attention on Newham, the borough next door to Tower Hamlets, where many Pakistani Muslims reside. Eade stated he lived in London, yet he seems very dislocated from Britain’s historical space. For example, he explores the controversial issue surrounding the call to *azan* (prayer), yet he does not examine the historical controversy over the *azan* in Britain. Even if he did not wish to look at the past, it would have been a richer study if he looked at other contested spaces in the world. I will therefore, examine the work by Abidin Kusno, 2003, in order to show that examining different spaces enriches our understanding, thereby enabling one to ask larger questions in order to produce wider degrees of solutions. However, my focus on Kusno’s work, 2003, will be limited to the discussion around the Candra Naya (19th century Chinese built space).

There are many academic studies that have been produced on ‘Muslim peoples’ and this is why it was not surprising that I came across many from my own University. Lisa Stark’s thesis, 2008, is particularly important for she devotes a section of her work on what she and many others refer to as, ‘Newham’s mega-mosque’. Stark stated, “in short, as the subject of a careful study one that questions both conventional wisdom and facts about implicitly assumed within academia about Islam-can give us a true sense of the state of relations between Muslims and the wider societies of Western Europe” (2008, 11-12). This statement is puzzling because her ‘careful’ study, although rich in political science theoretical comparisons, still ended up belonging to the academia of ‘Islamic’ knowledge that she was hoping to distance herself from. It seems then that when one is studying the ‘topic’ of Islam or Muslims, many are required to state the following redundant phrase. For example, Barbara Daly Metcalf stated, “this volume, in

short, offers a picture of Muslim life quite different from the political or “fanatical”, ones often presented in the media and, indeed, in many scholarly works” (1996, xi). One must then critically question what would constitute “careful” knowledge? Metcalf’s article was engaging, yet some of the articles placed in her book were rather essentialist and for me this would not reflect careful knowledge that would be acceptable for representing Muslims to the ‘academic world’.

There have been many studies that have warned individuals of the production of careful academic knowledge and from my understanding Edward Said was the first person that suggested that ‘we’ have a lot of work to do in order to dismantle the reductive formulae (1979, xxiii). Now, coming back to Stark her section on the ‘mega mosque’ assumes that the Tablighi Jamaat, the group that is developing the Markaz mosque is a ‘feared and to be feared fundamentalist’ group. A critical examination would have shown a richer complexity and understanding. Nonetheless, she does mention that the ‘Mega mosque’ is a unique case in terms of how mosques are built. Although Stark’s study is rich in political science theories, standing from the looking glass outside of this discipline, I found that her study lacked a thorough examination of the richness of mosque building outside of the political science boundary.

Methods

It is important to start off with some reflections on terms and methods that will be used, in order to not objectify and simplify the rich complexity in place. This is a chance to clarify some of the ambiguities and concerns readers may have. As I use the artificial categories of ‘British Muslim(s)’, I will generally be discussing the category in relation to ‘South Asian Muslims’ of whom the majority are ‘Pakistani’ and ‘Bangladeshi’ individuals. Although it is important to state that there is much diversity within these two groups, but for simplification purposes it is best to know the ‘larger’ group identity of ‘Bangladeshi’ and ‘Pakistani’; and the large circle around that identity, which in present date has turned out not to be ‘Black’ or ‘Asian’, but

‘Muslim’. According to Tariq Modood, South Asian Muslims occupy just over fifty percent of all Muslims in Britain (2005). Therefore, symbolizing a critical position, especially in relation to historical migration and architectural memories invested in Britain and the city of London. However, this study will not neglect the larger diverse Muslim and non-Muslim community for urban spaces are part of the everyday of many people.

The artificial category of “traditional” individuals, can become problematic, but it must be understood, at least through a process of simplification. I have found that Clifford Geertz definition of traditionalists in Java would be suitable as a simplified understanding. “Traditionalists tend to lament the younger generation and refer to the greater stability and single-mindedness of people in the past” (1976, 366). Thus, many are holding on to forms of belonging that are not completely changed with the winds of modernity. In terms of a time period this thesis will mainly focus on the late nineteenth-century to the present date, however this does not mean that ideologies were not carried forth from an earlier date. The time frame was chosen as a large result of the focus on the British Empire and the let us call it Multicultural Empire.

The tools that I will be using for this thesis will be the tool of “thick description” provided by Clifford Geertz and the tool of self-reflexivity. The study will focus on other areas of the world, for it allows one to bring together various cross comparisons as a method of investigating future forms of understanding and social change. Stuart Hall stated, “identities are always in the process of formation” (1997, 47). Though I am not Muslim, according to many individuals I would be placed under the artificial categories of ‘South East Asian’ and ‘South Asian’, the latter identity, which I share with many British Muslims; despite our other “racial”, “ethnic”, religious, and geographical diversity. Nationality is important therefore, I must state that though I am not British, I am ‘Canadian’. Thus, understanding the policy of multiculturalism

in a different landscape has been rather exciting and informative for cross comparison in my own 'local' space.

The case studies will rely heavily on online sources as a method for investigating how the national space promotes notions of conformity and difference at an intense rate. Therefore, Benedict Anderson's theory as already mentioned is quite important to reflect upon in terms of "long distance nationalism" that is carried forth through online communities. Online communities often position British Muslims as firstly a homogenous entity and secondly as individuals who are portrayed as not integrating into the nation state. According to Kusno's interpretation of Anderson's thoughts, "the essence of the nation, lies in its capacity to foster its citizens by means of representations, to collectively imagine a range of things" (2000, 89). This shows one how important it is to examine the nation in relation to its many hidden representations that are formed in the collective imagination of the urban and social imaginaries both online and off. Eric Hobsbawm's theory on nationalism suggests the many ways in which the power of national identification is shifting through time, especially through new waves of capitalism. Therefore, examining such spaces through online contestations reveals many political realities.

Limitations

This thesis may have many limitations; however, the ones that I am conscious of will be discussed. The thesis does not examine 'difference' within a "postcolonial" lens, therefore post-colonial critiques are a rather obvious target. It is not my intention to homogenize individuals or spaces, rather it is to allow for a re-thinking of British Muslims to occur that focuses on the complexity of urban space. Also, as C.A. Bayly stated, individuals cannot examine fragments without examining other parts of the world (2004, 8). Not only that, but according to Abidin Kusno postcolonial theory often brushes over the existence of 'in-between' identities (2000). It is then hoped that post-colonial theorists will be able to move on from their fragment lens, for they

often neglect important complexities in our multicentric world that cannot be ignored or brushed aside by focussing on one 'area' or localized space.

Another limit of this work is that it relies on the 'online community' to a heavy degree. Though the online space reveals many things it is limited in important factors, such as the impact of online newspapers, the journalists who are spreading the information and individuals socio-economic status and other factors which are all absent from my gaze. Elizabeth Poole, (2002) has also shown the limits and abuses of the media. Thus, as I engaged in methods of observing patterns of "long-distance nationalism" I did so by imagining that individuals were telling their own versions of the "truth". Although I would have liked to have a richer step inside these spaces, as a graduate student sometimes this can be problematic. However, my lack of engagement in the 'real' spaces may also be a strength because in a way I have the advantage of travelling to different spaces, through the Internet and via the research studies that have been carried out. Nonetheless, I hope that my understanding as an 'imaginary traveler' will be of some use in investigating such issues. I am conscious of the fact that there may be many critiques to be made on this thesis, which I may be unaware of at this moment. Thus, I hope that individuals will critique it, for it is as Lee S. Shulman stated, "learning flourishes when we take what we think we know & offer it as community property among fellow learners so that it can be tested, examined, challenged, and improved before we can internalize it"(1999, 12).

Organization of Thesis

Chapter one begins with an examination of colonial conformity through the burial spaces of the British Empire and it will end off with an examination of the 'same' spaces. This chapter will examine the ways in which colonial memories are becoming re-surfaced by members of the "imagined community" as a way to embed their own versions of national identity. I argue that as colonial memories are brought to the surface, the postcolonial victims of such memories are attempting to change urban spaces of remembrance in order to enable a ritual forgetting.

Chapter two begins with an examination on the politics of difference through ‘oriental’ architecture in London and it will then examine the modernist deconstructive design of the Markaz mosque and the “culture of fear” that it has produced. I will then examine the future site and will argue that the Markaz mosque has the potential for becoming both a space for national healing and agony, therefore crucial to explore. The chapter will show the various ways many “traditional” British Muslims negotiate with multiculturalism to find a spot to construct their identities both through conformity and difference.

The conclusion will provide an overview of what the thesis has aimed to accomplish and then it will move on to a further cross comparison with Benedict Andersons’ idea on long-distance nationalism. Further it will provide a discussion on the “Islamization of space” in Britain and beyond in order to show the positive and negative effects of such imagined spatialization. This thesis suggests that urban space is important not only for our everyday consciousness and social realities, but it is important for the study of “multiculturalism” and therefore should not be ignored.

Chapter One-Burial Politics

Memories travel from the past to the present and as they travel they become embedded in different forms of national traditions, which are further embedded into patterns of conformity. Abidin Kusno stated, “that the nation not only exists but is also embodied in the spaces of the city, is something at once obvious and yet often ignored” (2000, 97). If he is right then the social imaginaries of death and belonging in city spaces, deserves critical examination. For the spirit of the historical past it seems has become embedded into the social imaginaries of the everyday space of death and belonging. In this chapter we will examine how the past has become embedded into the present day contestations, by firstly focussing on the politics of conformity of the British Empire through the space of both ‘migrants’ and ‘locals’. From there it will become possible to understand why the present has not let the spirit of the past break free from its imagined realities and invented traditions of conformity. Although members of the British Muslims have been able to construct their identity and legitimacy through the complexity of conformity, there continues to be tension around such constructions, which cannot be ignored.

This chapter will examine the politics of conformity through the burial spaces of colonial and postcolonial London, Calcutta/Kolkata and Singapore. Burial complexities reveal the ways in which memories and issues of national identity are deeply inscribed within the consciousness of the “imagined community”. Therefore, they are important to explore. I argue that the national imagining of conformity that took place through the spaces of Empire shows the ways in which symbolic issues of memory and belonging are woven into the present day burial complexity. Many individuals are either attempting to preserve memories of a colonial past through the preservation of historical cemeteries or they are like many members of the British Muslims preserving notions of difference. Therefore, in Britain individuals are trying to change the urban memories of colonialism that keep getting re-positioned in the nation and this is done by making “Muslim space”. Many, however, have chosen to imagine such forms of ‘Islamic’ development as an “underdevelopment” of London, which is often imagined to be a change from London to a

derogatory notion of “Londonistan”. Hence, the politics of conformity from the past must be explored because it demonstrates how issues of memory, religion, architecture, assimilation, and spatial ordering are all embedded into the postcolonial present. Thus, showing one that understanding the past and present day urban spaces are important for the study of multiculturalism, which is trying to survive based on the ‘great divergence’ that has occurred between conformity and difference.

This chapter therefore has two purposes. The first is to understand the process of historical conformities that are embedded into the present day national burial spaces. And, in order to understand the construction of identity many engaged in both in the past and present it is crucial to examine the role of religion. Religion provided individuals with the key to gaining access to space and this is still used in present day by many “traditional” individuals. However, many in the present are challenging such religious construction based on an identity construction attached with a historical English consciousness. Thus, it is important to examine the past in order to investigate how the Empire has not left ‘us’ in present day. The second purpose of this chapter is to examine the past and present day complexities in different geo-political areas, as a way to find out if London is capable of producing a reality of “equal relations” based on conscious policy changes. London is facing a burial problem, thus issues of burial space both by religious individuals who need cemetery space and by members of the larger community who desire ‘historical memories’ to be kept alive is a serious concern. It is best now to begin our journey by examining the British Empire through the earliest ‘Asian migrants’.

Lascars and the Struggle over Conformity

The patterns of burial conformity were constructed by the British Empire in a rather direct and indirect manner, and the patterns of conformity carved out by the missionaries in London were quite often direct. A good example is the migrant’s dilemma of assimilating to such patterns of both Empire and ‘missionary’ conformity. Let us begin our understanding by examining the

space of the missionaries. The arrival of the Lascars (Asian seamen/sailors) to Britain in the nineteenth-century was for many missionaries the opportunity to create religious conformity by preaching the values of both the nationalism of Britain and religion of Christianity. The term Lascars generally referred to 'Asiatics' from various different spaces, I will however focus on Muslim Lascars generally of whom the majority in present day would be known as 'Bangladeshi Muslims'.

Many individuals arrived in Britain and faced devastating conditions, which provided the opportunity for missionaries to carve out patterns of religious conformity. According to Ansari, the number of Muslim seamen who arrived on the ports in Britain increased from 3,000 in 1842 to 10,000 to 12,000 in 1855 (2007, 550). As many arrived and settled in Britain they faced devastating conditions and were often found in ship hospitals or prisons, which many chose to go to because of homelessness and hunger (Salter, 1873). It is important to note that many Lascars did find employment in Anglo-Indian homes as cooks, therefore creating their own patterns of conformity, however that is another story. Nonetheless, many missionaries such as, Joseph Salter viewed the arrival of these individuals as an opportunity to spread the message of Christianity in hopes that they would leave London and carry Christianity to other parts of the world. However, the reality of imposing Christianity often clashed with the attempts made by many Orientalists who created "Islamic space", by enhancing the value of the Empire and its subjects; thereby, creating Empire conformity through urban space, this will be explored later on. Nevertheless, many missionaries were successful in assimilating some individuals into British norms and values. Although many Lascars may have embraced Christianity they did so on their own terms. Thereby, creating silent differences through a public display of conformity, in a rather eerie way this is similar to the present in which many individuals may embrace 'British norms and values', but again on their own terms.

Creating religious conformity through the ‘Asiatics’ allowed many missionaries to carve out patterns of distinctive ‘British-Christian’ values, which were losing ground to the principles of the enlightenment. The arrival of the Lascars therefore became a gift to both impose religious conformity on different bodies and to the British nation, that was slowly envisioning a new ‘secular’ reality. Perhaps, then related to the present day fear of an “Islamic” reality that has led many individuals to create historical ‘English’ burial conformity. Nonetheless, missionaries campaigned for a home to be established both as way to control the spread of ‘Asiatics’ to different areas of Britain and as a chance for creating a national Christian awakening. The home was the first public institution that was set up for assimilating individuals into the national imagination of a Christian religiosity. Not surprisingly, the home shows no symbolic design of any form of “Oriental” architectural motifs. The dream of the home did clash with the Orientalists dream of Islamic space, which will be explored further on.

A home was set up by an investment from both the Empire and the missionaries, despite their political differences. It was established on June 3rd, 1857 in East London as the “Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders”, although like many other identity constructions, it was further labelled as the “Strangers Home”. The following images describe the national and religious attempts of creating conformity both through the ‘subjects’ and the national community. The first image reads “Be Not Forgetful To Entertain Strangers”, while the second is a group photograph of the Lascars that appeared in the work by Joseph Salter.

Illustration 1.1 “Strangers Home”

Illustration 1.2 “Lascars”

Illustration 1.1 has been removed due to copyright restriction.
(Moving Here, 2008).
Strangers Home for the Natives.
[http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/..%5Cdeliveryfiles%5CPRO%5CMT9 362M1067 1890%5C%27.pdf](http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/..%5Cdeliveryfiles%5CPRO%5CMT9%20362M1067%201890%5C%27.pdf).

Illustration 1.2 has been removed due to copyright restriction.
(British Library online, 2008).
Online image of Lascars.
<http://www.imagesonline.bl.uk/results.asp?image=067673&imagex>

Although many missionaries were successful in creating patterns of religious conformity amongst some Asiatics, many were not able to convince others to assimilate and embrace Christianity. Muslims and other Asians were seen as conforming to “long-distance religious nationalism”, even though many in ‘public’ may have been conforming to the national norms of British values. This seems to be a clear pattern of the present day fragility of multiculturalism, for many are still partaking in “long distance religious nationalism” despite their localized identities. The following is evidence of the battle over religious conformity:

“The day before he died Mohammed Khan stated, “Will you not allow me to recite my *kulma* (article of faith) and die?” The missionary replied, “Why should I leave you to recite your *kulma* and die? Your *kulma* will not change your heart and make you fit to dwell in the presence of a sinless holy being; you are dying with your sins, and your Arabic recital cannot take them away, but I have come to tell you who can”. The natives of the distant land urged him to listen...but Mohammed Khan during his last breaths was found stating Allah! Allah! Allah!”

(Salter 1873, 140-142).

Muslims such as Mohammed Khan may have died reciting sacred verses from the Qu’ran, but the way in which many were buried often showed that their bodies were conforming to the Christian religious space. For, Islamic burial customs do not normally allow for coffins for

emplacing the dead, but many in Britain in the past were buried in coffins and this has not changed in the present; although, coffins in the present day are designed with special provisions made for Muslims. Thereby, becoming an invented Christian tradition, which has become adopted by many members of the British Muslims both due to the legality of burial 'rules', but perhaps also because it was an acceptable invented tradition that became part of British Muslim boundaries.

Despite the "long distance traditions" the Orientalists and Lascars brought with them, many missionaries were completely divided from that world of knowledge. For example, Joseph Salter found that when Abdool, a Muslim man died, "a coffin was procured somehow, and he was carried to the grave and deposited in his last home by his countrymen; a tribute of respect which all Asiatics, even with difficulties attending it in England, are always anxious to perform with scrupulosity" (1873, 185). Thus, many individuals invented long-distance traditions that were performed through the display of large funerals. This was well known both to the British Empire and the Orientalists that carved out space for difference. It is then important to understand just how and why Islamic graves were visualized in London as symbolically different through the Orientalists. Were they portrayed as symbols of difference or marked as symbols of conformity with the British Empire? For this understanding we need to step into the space of colonial India.

Funerary Conformity through Architecture

The British Empire in India carved out a rather unique funerary tradition, which at first seems to be showing aspects of difference, but patterns of conformity were a clear objective. The funerary architecture showed that many 'Anglo-Indians' both, the 'nabobs' and 'reformers' were carving out rituals of remembrance as powerful rulers; and through the space of 'Oriental' London many were reasserting their rule through the design of funerary architecture for the subjects. Therefore, showing to the nation the ways in which the Orientals were still subjects, rather than as 'equal'

citizens. Thus, Islamic burials ensured difference was publicly maintained as a way to create a “national belonging” with the imagined community that viewed the Empire’s subjects through the gaze of architectural difference and Empire conformity.

The funerary architecture that was embedded in many cities in India, such as Calcutta and Surat ensured the power of visibility was maintained by conforming to the normative Empire burial customs that were already in place through the previous rulers. Therefore, many Anglo-Indians conformed to the larger notions of funerary customs by re-creating their status as greater than the former Mughal Empire that had also created funerary symbols of power in India. The following images are of the English cemeteries in India and of the Brookwood Cemetery in London (which was one of the first Muslim burial grounds created because of Orientalism). All three images show patterns of funerary architecture embedded through Empire conformity.

Illustration 1.3 South Park Street Cemetery, Kolkata

Illustration 1.4 English Cemetery, Surat

Illustration 1.3 has been removed due to due to copyright restriction.
Gerry and Denise Aitken. 2004.
Gothic Crows and Colonial Madness in Kolkata.
<http://www.travelblog.org/Asia/India/West-Bengal/Kolkata/blog-1992.html>

Illustration 1.4 has been removed due to copyright restriction.
Surat Old English Cemetery: Grave Christophorus & George Oxenden.
<http://www.unigreifswald.de/.../Surat.html>

Illustration 1.5 Brookwood Cemetery, London

Illustration 1.5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
Brookwood Cemetery. 2008. Muslim graves. <http://www.brookwoodcemetery.com/img88.gif>

Thus, spaces in both Britain and India reflected an “in-between” identity that in public was perceived as different, but was carving out patterns of Empire conformity.

Now that one has an understanding on funerary architecture conformity it is important to further examine the clash between the Orientalists and the missionaries. The Orientalist that created visibility of Empire conformity through embedding spatial difference in London was G.W. Leitner. He ensured separate space was granted to many Muslims through built spaces such as, mosques and graves. Leitner, also created the Woking Mosque, one of the first mosques in the London area, which will be explored in the next chapter. So, it is not surprising that he also established one of the first Muslim burial spaces in Brookwood cemetery (Illustration 1.5).

London in the past was having deep anxieties over the lack of burial space. In order to create more space aligned with the embedded notions of discipline and beautification of space, large cemeteries were created that would establish an atmosphere of nation-hood and a display of London’s modernity to the ‘world’, despite the space problem. The Times news of 1854 reported, “it is fitting enough that the largest city in the world should have the largest cemetery in the world” (Ansari 2007, 558). Thus, despite the lack of space, modernization carved out spatial changes and through these urban changes sacred space was created for many Muslim bodies. Although Islamic burial spaces were contested, as one can see through the present day

Brookwood cemetery, they were never removed. Thereby, becoming symbols not only of difference, but also of Empire conformity.

Leitner left detailed instructions on how to bury Muslims and this can still be seen in the present day Brookwood cemetery. Therefore, this is a symbolic marker of how British Muslims should be treated differently even though clearly this was an attempt at ensuring conformity with the British Empire and its study of the Orientals. Leitner left the following message, placed near the *qibla* stone that can be found in present day Brookwood cemetery.

“The graves of Muhammadans are dug so as to allow the body to lie with its face towards Mecca (see direction of the *kibla* stone). The graves should be 4ft deep with a side recess which is then closed with unburnt bricks, the grave is then filled with earth and a mound raised over it...the *kibla* stone has the cardinal compass points and arrows facing east carved on it”

(Ansari 2007, 559).

In present day postcolonial spaces many members of the British Muslims use historical funerary architecture as a tool to gain recognition rights, especially to ensure that proper burial space be granted. Thus many are engaged in remembering an “Orientalist” past that provided them with separate space, which many believe should be part of the ‘boundaries of public religion’. However, individuals of the largely “English” ethnicity are ensuring that the gaze of ‘missionary’ colonial spaces is not entirely wiped out. So, in a rather eerie way the colonial mentality of the past battles between the missionaries and orientalists has found its spirit in the present day contestation of space. For many individuals are carving out invented traditions by bringing the national imagination of colonial history into the everyday reality of invented remembrance. And as such many are establishing national cemetery conformity by enabling that such “sacred spaces” of English colonial history are not victimized through the process of “Islamic modernization”. Therefore, instead of developing and modernizing burial spaces as in the past, many individuals are attempting to bring back colonial memories as a way to nationalize ‘forgotten’ English spaces. I will now examine the contestations of such colonial re-surfacing of remembrance that is occurring in present day.

Holding on to the Colonial and Postcolonial City

In present day there have been many attempts to remember burial spaces as a way to create an imagined conformity through common interconnections as former “British” citizens. However, such colonial re-imaginings have become contested by many “victims” of the colonial and postcolonial spaces. Many individuals who have been portrayed as the “victims” of such colonial spaces are trying to shed the victim identity by changing the urban spaces and social memories invested into the remembrance of cemetery space. Thereby, creating conformity with many individuals who share the status as victims of a colonial and postcolonial space. To further understand the postcolonial ambivalence it is best that ‘we’ now travel back to the landscape of India.

The present day concern over the decaying English cemeteries in India did not arise from local residents, but arose from “long-distance nationalism” by ‘English’ individuals residing in Britain, largely London. The British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA) was established in Britain during the nineteen-seventies, as a way to preserve decaying English cemeteries, particularly South Park Street Cemetery in Kolkata and Surat. The South Park Street Cemetery had many tombstones that were built from material gathered or stolen from the sacred spaces of Hindu Temples (Buettner, 2006). Therefore, the ‘Anglo-Indians’ were creating Empire conformity, by incorporating their subject’s religiosity into funerary architecture that symbolized their status as rulers of the space and bodies.

The BACSA group though are conscious of the ways the material and spaces of cemeteries were gathered nonetheless have expressed concerns that such gated spaces were becoming ‘opened’ to many ‘squatters’ who were found constructing new identities and homes. Thus, the ‘gated community’ of colonial memories was changed through a ritual forgetting of a (post)colonial space by many ‘indigenous’ individuals. Due to globalization many do not need to reside or travel to Kolkata, for they can maintain such exclusionary space through “online long-

distance nationalism”. The following image shows the ways in which the cemetery became constructed with new forms of symbolic memories of a new time and space that was eventually challenged with the establishment of BACSA. Therefore, eerie reflections on the ways in which bringing colonial memories to the present are forming new spaces of exclusionary boundaries.

Illustration 1.6 “Squatters” in the South Park Street Cemetery, 1970s

Illustration 1.6 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
(Buettner 2006, 22). Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India. *History & Memory* 18:1 5-42

In present day many English cemeteries in India have become tourist attractions or parks, which in a way erases the memories that the indigenous individuals were trying to construct. During the time period when the cemetery was not under ‘surveillance’ many individuals in Kolkata were found stealing the building materials, of headstones in order to convert them into tables for tea stalls and other ‘material’ (Buettner, 2006). Therefore, showing the ways in which the sacred memories of the Hindu temples were forgotten and replaced by memories of ruin. Objects and artefacts thus became a symbolic representation of urban space being integrated into a new environment conducting its own forms of appropriate memories, which in present day may frame memories of victim-hood as ‘postcolonial’ subjects, residing in the changed city of Kolkata. Perhaps, then linked to the present day, postcolonial London where many are now changing city memories into new investments of social form, which reinforce patterns of difference, rather than interconnections.

It is best that we now travel back to present-day London and examine the postcolonial ambivalence of conformity and difference that was embedded in the Tower Hamlets Cemetery, also known as “Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park”. This cemetery may have been imagined by many as an “underdevelopment” of London by “traditional Muslims”, who ironically enough were trying to “modernize” such “underdeveloped” space. Thus, the attempt to conserve the colonial memories through a nationalizing attempt of preserving English burial conformity was undertaken, not by the BACSA group, but ‘local’ individuals who were worried that the historical English space would become ‘modernized’ by Islamic urbanization and funerary architecture. The Tower Hamlets Cemetery is a clear case of identity construction that multiculturalism needs to pay attention to, for the conflicts between majority and minority politics are woven into its everyday reality. It is best then that we first examine the ways in which historical memories are re-surfacing in London amongst many ‘English’ individuals that are attempting to nationalize such colonial spaces of nationality and belonging.

The latest contestations over burial space took place in the year 2007, in the London borough of Tower Hamlets (East London) over the Tower Hamlets Cemetery. Therefore, London like the past, is facing once again a growing concern over the lack of burial space for the dead. Thus, as many members of the British Muslims carve out their identities and legitimacy through the space provided by multiculturalism, they face a danger to this aspect of their legitimacy; because of the lack of ‘sacred space’ available through burial provisions in London, especially in Tower Hamlets. Many Bangladeshi ‘Syhleti’ Muslims, heavily populate the borough of Tower Hamlets. And, many were searching for sacred space in a region that lacked Muslim burial provisions and they thought they found this space through the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. Although this case study is particularly important in relation to identity construction for members of the British Muslims, it is firstly important for one to grasp why many ‘English’ individuals were not willing to give up such historical space. The space seems to

be ideologically embedded with the forgotten identity of a colonial city and perhaps, even a dying space for urbanized forms of Protestant Christianity. Therefore, attempts are being maintained to create conformity through forgotten colonial spaces that may be perceived by many as becoming underdeveloped by the ‘Islamization of space’.

The ritual re-surfacing of historical space, such as the Tower Hamlets Cemetery shows the emerging culture of fear over urban changes linked with the policy of multiculturalism. The Tower Hamlets Cemetery was created in the nineteenth century and it was part of the ‘development’ of London where a few large cemeteries were created that were envisioned to become sites of funerary architecture and displays of national conformity. According to many online sites, many in the present have argued that this cemetery was a national symbol of British values and that members of the British Muslims should engage in celebrating such historical space, rather than change in order to make room for new Muslim bodies. Therefore, many were attempting to position burial spaces within the realm of cultural integration. This space was thus threatened by an ‘Islamic modernity’ that would have cleared the old bodies and symbols of conformity with local English funerary architecture in order to have made new memories of the presence and legitimacy of British Muslim identity. The following images are of the Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Park.

Illustration 1.7 Tower Hamlets Burials

Illustration 1.8 Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

Illustrations 1.7 and 1.8 have been removed due to copyright restrictions.
(Michelle Moron blogspot, 2007). History Buff. http://michellemoran.blogspot.com/2007_10_17_archive.html.

Therefore, individuals were holding onto a symbolic memory of historical space, as a way to reject the notion of a postcolonial London. Thereby, creating conformity through holding on to a certain imagined national British space through myths of positive national memories.

Many individuals are holding on to a historical past due to the fear both of urbanization and “Muslim modernization”. Individuals are thus holding onto a common belonging with an invented tradition of turning burials into positive memories of shared spaces with the English dead and living. Modes of urbanization are feared because they change notions of invented belonging that many have already invested into built spaces, such as burials. Thus, the fear over Muslims changing Tower Hamlets cemetery reveals the fear of many not wanting to invest their invented traditions and notions of belonging into a space perceived as different. So, many are re-inventing cemeteries that have a purpose both for tourist capital and national belonging. Despite, the individuals holding on to forms of an imagined past those historical memories of architecture, bodies, and space are being changed while new invented traditions are constructed. Marshall Bermann stated, “although, most of these people have probably experienced modernity as a radical threat to all of their history and traditions, it has in the course of five centuries, developed a rich history and a plenitude of traditions of its own” (1988, 16). Thus re-imagining a reality that allows individuals to hold onto a form of “tradition” shows that the politics of conformity and difference are very fragile, especially in the present day space of multiculturalism.

One must then wonder is it possible for multiculturalism to engage in just one form of national structure, either conformity or difference? It would allow for a placement of a national conformity, would it not? Perhaps, for a better understanding on the politics of conformity, we must now travel to colonial and postcolonial Singapore and examine the contestation of Chinese burial grounds. It is once again important to not homogenize religions or individuals in Singapore, for that would strip individuals and spaces of their rich diversity. However, for our

simplified understanding burial spaces were contested by many different Chinese groups and many members of the nations “imagined community” also agreed upon patterns of cremation conformity. Therefore, it is important to examine such a contested past and present.

Nationalizing Burial Conformity

The politics of conformity and difference have been battling one another for many years in Singapore and the result in present day turned out to be that conformity had been achieved through nationalizing cremation. The colonial and postcolonial space of Singapore, like London faced the problem of lack of space, especially as they both underwent processes of ‘development’. In Singapore creating national modernization became a central goal of both the British Empire and the nation-state and that is why Chinese burial grounds were the sites of contestation. Though there are a minority of individuals in present day who are using burial grounds and contesting spaces of ‘modernization’ and ‘development’ the majority of individuals since the nineteen-eighties have conformed and adapted to the nationalizing project of cremation. However, this struggle was very contested in Singapore’s past and present. In order to gain a wider understanding of such contestation we must understand the colonial contestations over Chinese burial grounds, for they show aspects of both conformity and difference.

In colonial Singapore, Chinese burial grounds were contested by the British, due to the overall ‘national’ plan to make room for more space and therefore cleanse Singapore of its lack of ‘discipline and unsanitary conditions’. Hence, urban planning and development attempts were made to clear the grounds of the Chinese presence and identity construction that many individuals tied to a “long-distance nationalism” largely with China. As attempts were placed on the Chinese community to remove such rigid un-disciplined burial space, many individuals protested and demonstrated that they had a right to the sacred burial spaces, as it was part of *feng shui* (geomancy) and ancestor worship. For example, Brenda Yeoh stated:

“Unlike the West where the habitations of the living and those of the dead belonged to different worlds, in the Chinese view, ‘the tomb is the yin habitation to match the yang habitation of the living’ within a single system. It was this lack of rigid boundaries between sacred and worldly in Chinese religious culture that Western observers found puzzling and degrading” (Yeoh 2003, 303).

Many Chinese were somewhat successful in sustaining sacred spaces of difference through burial grounds. However, their success in maintaining such difference through religious identity construction was contested once again during the birth of the nation-state of Singapore. Hence, the (post)colonial ambivalent of conformity and difference was sought out in Singapore through the imagined ideal of achieving a unified national development. The unification of conformity and difference has been somewhat achieved in Singapore, however, it seems national conformity has the upper hand over rights to difference. For the adoption of cremation amongst the “imagined community” has become a “successful” national conformity.

Although individuals in Singapore, like in Britain have ‘religious rights’, the state achieved its national burial conformity by an indirect linkage to the “imagined community” through ‘middlemen’ and capitalism. Individuals tied to funerary institutions, such as funeral parlours, were successful in promoting the cremation option for many Chinese in Singapore, both because of their knowledge on religious funerary norms, customs and because of ‘trust’. For example, “the government cannot very well say everyone in Singapore has to be cremated since there is suppose to be religious freedom in Singapore...so they ask us (funeral parlour owners/caretakers) to promote cremation”(Hui and Yeoh 2002, 10). Initially many funerary ‘middlemen’ had difficulty in creating “Chinese” cremation coffins and funerary objects. However they succeeded by altering many Catholic coffins by placing “lion heads” designs on the coffins rather than crosses (Hui and Yeoh 2002, 10). Funerary objects were created as a way to integrate the Chinese religious customs into a space that was through the “middlemen” made into an acceptable and familiar space. Eric Hobsbawm is then quite right in suggesting that

political elites design nationalism, for that was certainly achieved as the popularity of cremation and national columbarium's was established in Singapore by the nineteen-eighties.

There is a small minority of individuals that have contested patterns of national burial conformity and as such the state has compromised, which may be a solution to Britain's burial complexity. Groups such as the "Hakka Ying Foh Fui Kun", "Hokkien Huay Kuan", and many Muslim minorities are not conforming to the national spaces of cremation in Singapore (Hui and Yeoh, 2002). Although the group members have secured many forms of 'religious' burial space provisions in Singapore, it is often cautiously granted and disciplined both by time and space. Therefore, as a result of the success of the nation-state, the only national cemetery left for burial usage is the Choa Chu Kung Cemetery, which although opened in 1947 has often been exhumed for newer bodies and frequent urbanization.

The Choa Chu Kung Cemetery is important to examine because although it paves a way for many individuals to partake in religious difference through burial space, the nation-state has made individuals conform to certain 'rules' as a way to ensure the space is disciplined. The cemetery though is a national burial space has attached to it the national conformity of cremation by having a columbarium attached to it; created for individuals who want to provide a space of remembrance for the dead after their grave time has passed. Thus, symbolizing patterns of conformity with the national objectives of the state by positioning a ritual reminder of the conformity of the rest of the nations community that has conformed to cremation options. In Singapore the national burial period is limited to fifteen years, in which the burial spot will be exhumed for the next in line. However, because of certain 'religious' freedom that the state has promised, individuals, who require burial space for more than fifteen years are then moved to much smaller plots within Choa Chu Kung (NEA, 2004). Should, London then take Singapore's national conformity of cremation and cemetery policies as an example to make room for more space? Perhaps, but what is most interesting about this cemetery is that religious conformity has

become very exclusive. For example, the image of the Chinese burial spaces shows a certain level of conformity through both religious and national space.

Illustration 1.9 “Chinese burial grounds Singapore”

Illustration 1.9 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
(Flickr online, 2007). Cho, William. 2007. Garden of Memories.
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/adforce1/557170557/>.

Although Choa Chu Kung national cemetery is the only one left for burials in Singapore, like London many individuals are holding onto historical cemeteries, such as the Bukit Brown Cemetery that was under threat of development. The Bukit Brown Cemetery, better known as Coffee Hill (*Kopi Sua*) like the Tower Hamlets Cemetery shows that as wildlife enters the confines of the dead, it becomes associated with an important space for both historical bodies and the present day life that resides in such spaces. In order to sustain such historical spaces, it seems that rather than positioning urban spaces for the dead as an important part of ones everyday national spaces; individuals cross-culturally imagine wildlife as an intermediary between both the dead and the social beings that visit the cemetery. Thereby, showing that historical cemeteries have become invented as ‘parks’ in order to ensure a symbolic value entering the social forms of the invented patterns of everyday life. Hence, exhibiting forms of global conformity towards national remembrance and forgetting by changing burial memories as spaces of a ritual rebirth of memories of happiness.

The level of conformity achieved in Singapore, may not be possible in London, for multiculturalism has already promised many forms of recognition, that cannot be altered by any forms of indirect “middlemen”. For, if that were to occur members of the British Muslims would lose part of their national religious identity, would you not agree? However, the complexity of burial space in Singapore has been somewhat solved and this aspect is of incredible value to the problem of lack of space in Britain.

Modernizing Remembrance

As the battle over burial space continues there may become many new invented traditions of keeping memory alive through concrete spaces of architectural remembrance. As previously examined Singapore is involved in many forms of national cremation conformity, however what was not examined was how memories invested into built spaces such as columbaria, act as the holders of various forms of ‘modern remembrance’. This is important to explore in order to help us further understand the burial politics in Britain. Elizabeth Teather stated, “designing columbaria that are functional, sensitive, and culturally specific provides a fascinating challenge to architects” (1999, 409). Many architects may have to design the ‘challenging’ built spaces, but the imagined community often faces a similar challenge in constructing and investing traditional memories both ‘personal’ and ‘national’ into forms of modern remembrance.

The increase in cremation in many parts of the world has resulted in columbariums, which are designed as a ‘living memory space’ for the dead. Many architects outside of Britain have designed the columbaria as hi-rise towers or other ‘cultural’ building styles that are socially imagined and associated with the living. As these spaces become forms of new invented traditions the old spaces, such as cemetery grounds are left in ‘traditional’ decay. Therefore in Britain turning historical cemeteries into national parks of remembrance becomes associated not only with the fear of Muslims ‘moving in’, but also with the fear of cremation and columbaria that are a psychological threat to many individuals sense of belonging. Historical cemeteries are

thus turning into national parks of invented remembrance in order to construct modern remembrance that is on par with the new burial modernity of resting in columbarium peace.

In Singapore and other areas of the world the state is involved in burial modernization by having architects design modern forms of resting in peace. Thus, the dead are now entering into the world of remembrance for the living by residing in modern built forms, which implies that they are not in decay. Memories of the dead are therefore placed in silent, yet powerful symbols of architectural modernity. This form of crematorium conformity has not found a 'market' in Britain, as of yet. However, Britain according to the city of London online, 2008 has many forms of cremation remembrance such as, 'mini cremation plots', columbaria, (which are not as of yet 'grand buildings') flower plots, and plants that fulfill the role of objects of remembrance. Perhaps this is why spaces such as historical cemeteries in Britain and beyond are turning into remembrance parks, as a method to ensure that modernization does not enter into the land of the dead.

There are many forms of remembrance that are placed in the city spaces and the memories that are attached to the dead are crucial symbols of the nation and its political stage of trying to create burial conformity. As individuals opt for the cremation option in the future the presence of modern built spaces for remembering the dead may become a popular sight. Hence, symbolizing that many individuals need objects/artefacts to remember even though the memories are monitored by the state. Therefore columbariums, burial plots, and various other forms of cremation remembrance are disciplined by the state's monitored gaze of granting memory time only to those who pay for the memories to be stored in urban space. The following image describes the changes brought forth through 'burial urbanization' in Singapore; and the statement summed up by the photographer who took the image symbolizes the meanings of the site as becoming a deconstruction of an old memory of burial grounds into one that is not yet quite ready to become 'modern'.

Illustration 1.10 The Garden of Remembrance

“This isn’t a new condominium or private housing estate. It’s a cemetery. Or at least some kind of urn housing”

(Flickr online, 2007).

Illustration 1.10 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

Sir Loin of Beef. 2007. The Garden of Remembrance. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/96785691@N00/360442265/>.

As memories of remembrance become modernized in public many individuals hold on to traditional belonging by creating forms of familiarity through an in-between space of new and old memories. As the old memories are temporarily replaced through modern meanings many associate the visibility of such built structures as a threat of losing not only the dead, but of the memories of the traditional image of the landscape that the departed carried with them and left behind. For example, “one interviewee, recounted anxiety over his fathers wake: “my father had never walked there in his life; how is his soul going to find that place?”” (Keong and Kong 2000, 16). Thus, symbolizing that despite the new forms of architectural modernity invested into burial remembrance buildings, many have not let go of the traditional perceptions of an imagined death and remembrance through ‘sacred space’; hence are found negotiating with an in-between remembrance. This is interconnected to the threat of losing a certain imagined image of English burial grounds that many may have imagined from the gaze of the departed; who have left behind their memories of an imagined nation through a homogenous perception of a time embedded in historical space.

As memories of remembrance become modernized many individuals have found a way to carve out an interesting space of modernity and tradition through urbanization. Many individuals are therefore engaging in forms of indirect remembrance through modern architecture. For example, “Given the shortage of land, and the rapid rate of modernization and urban settlement, apartments that are built over former cemeteries are regarded as prime land and are popular with Chinese Singaporeans” (Keong and Kong 2000, 2). This symbolizes a new form of remembrance and belonging by living on top of the dead thereby becoming symbolic of funerary architecture that is hidden from the radar of the state. Hence, instead of built forms of remembrance such as angels, lion heads headstones and so-forth, hi-rise buildings have covered the former cemetery space and have protected the site from the decay of remembrance.

The placement of national columbariums in Britain has been successful, but because of minority religious rights that have been promised, the state cannot demand that Muslims be cremated as it is against their religion. Britain has a high rate of cremation in present day, but nonetheless faces a very complex burial problem. Although Britain has established and tried to create a national burial conformity for cremation many non-Muslims are not willing to give up burial space, as it has become a national tradition, perceived by ones religious experience and social imaginaries. This is then where the contestation of space begins because the historical cemeteries stand as symbols of remembering a homogenous time that has become invented through many burial traditions, that cannot be entirely wiped out from ones memory. Yet, at the same time many British Muslims although are trying to conform to the local burial traditions have found difficulty in finding space to bury the dead; because of the invented traditions of holding on to historical burial remembrance through establishing parks rather than making ‘Muslim space’.

If the contestation over burial space is not critically examined many will continue with the trend of long distance burials and sooner or later the presence of the ‘transnational bodies’

will become a heavy burden for the nations that have accepted the bodies to be buried in these landscapes. Although I wonder if many 'Chinese' in Singapore are partaking in transnational burials as some members of the British Muslims have partaken in, as they faced some serious 'dangers' because of the lack of burial space available. Let us now travel back to Tower Hamlets, East London to examine forms of identity construction and legitimacy that is made possible through the politics of conformity and difference embedded within multiculturalism for members of the British Muslims.

Making Sacred Burial Space in London

The case of Tower Hamlets Cemetery shows the ways in which the 'victims' of postcolonial spaces, are now changing the meanings invented into the social imaginaries of urban space. As multiculturalism provides individuals the chance to construct their identities, they do so by challenging the historical memories that are being brought to the surface. Therefore, in order to further grasp the "Islamization of Space" it is firstly important to understand what this concept would actually mean for "traditional" Muslims. A religious rather than 'national' definition seems to be the most appropriate. Generally *dar-al-Islam* is considered a space in which many Muslims practice their religion in a sacred space, whereas *dar-al-harb* is a space where Muslims cannot practice their religion freely. One way to get around the dangers of *dar-al-harb* is to create Islamic space within the boundaries of the non-religious space, thereby creating artificial sacred space, such as in London. Perhaps, that is why the fear of losing historical and secularized space is often thought of as losing a certain imagined British identity that although is embedded in the policy of multiculturalism is losing its hold through urban space; because of the politics of difference, which many have been using as a strategic political tool, since the Rushdie affair.

Many British Muslims although are assimilating to the national conformity of aligning bodies in a national disciplinary way are doing so in an Islamic method. For example, the bodies although are aligned according to national standards, are actually positioned in the direction of

where Mecca is geo-politically imagined to be. Thus, as other individuals enter the space of where the majority of dead Muslims reside, many have to conform to an Islamic direction of having their bodies faced towards the direction of the sacred space of Mecca. As British Muslims construct changes within invented traditions, they are also constructing changes of the postcolonial realities of perceived victim-hood. Therefore, it is not too surprising that the push for creating a policy of integration is now on the national stage.

Tower Hamlets is a borough of East London, known for its' settler and working class population and it has historically been the land for many emigrants in the London area. For example, many Calvinist Protestant Huguenot silk weavers, Irish Catholics, Russian and Polish Jews, and Chinese emigrants were the ones to have first occupied the majority in Tower Hamlets during different time periods (Eade 1996, 1). However many moved out and now the 'slum' area of London is largely occupied by Bangladeshi Muslims and since the Rushdie affair many are still at the worse levels of socio-economic status in the nation. Thus, as the borough faces burial space problems, many are shipping bodies to areas such as Sylhet, Bangladesh through Biman Bangladesh airways. This is partly because of "long-distance nationalism", but mostly because burying the dead in boroughs outside of Tower Hamlets is expensive. The rather unequal policy charges individuals extra burial costs if they are not residents of a particular borough. Thus, shipping bodies back to other spaces is considerably cheaper and easier. Also, Hussein and Rugg stated, "although local authorities are empowered by legislation to provide space for burial, there is no actual requirement to do so it is for this reason that one London Borough-Tower Hamlets- does not maintain any cemeteries" (2003, 214).

The Tower Hamlets Cemetery shows the ways in which the construction of sacred burial space for members of the British Muslims was challenged by the colonial memories that were re-imagined in the national spaces. The space was contested in the year 2007 and the legislative body of Britain announced that the cemetery would not be changed because of its status of

having wildlife and a historical memory attached to a national imagining. Hence, members of the British Muslims were denied a chance to construct their identity through such invented remembrance, even though clearly they are a significant majority of Tower Hamlets. The Burial Act of 1857 had made it illegal to disturb the dead without a licence; however, this act has been revised to legally allow removal and re-use of the space of former bodies, if the cemetery space is generally more than one hundred years or older (Hussein and Rugg, 2003). However, this is often as one can see a highly contested issue. So, is London undergoing an “underdevelopment” by keeping such historical space of colonial memories alive, for they do not imply a modernity of any sort, do they? If they did, then what symbolic role does multiculturalism have in this level of keeping colonial memories alive; especially, since it has promised recognition and space for many of its postcolonial ‘victims’ who are trying to change urban memories in order to construct their identities.

Benedict Anderson stated that nations were imagined into existence, thus another way besides from concrete space to trace the imagined existence of the nation is through the online space. The contestation over the Tower Hamlets Cemetery revealed many hidden layers of agony over identity between both non-Muslims and many diverse groups of Muslims. The controversy appeared in many online newspaper sources, however many British Muslims were often silent from such “online long-distance nationalism”. One may wonder why this is and I do not have a concrete answer for this. Unfortunately, I was unable to trace Muslim voices, however, I was able to find Muslim voices through a different controversy over Muslim burial space in Britain and as such it will be used as a comparison to the Tower Hamlets controversy. The bodies in this cemetery could have been legally removed, but because of the online national space of newspapers and petitions many were successful in claiming the historical space as property of the ‘national imagination’ of English identity. Even though multiculturalism is the official national policy, it has become contested and it is especially becoming agonizing through the

online space. Therefore, as Tariq Modood pointed out multiculturalism is perceived as nationally dying, then the question is, should we save it?

Although there is a 'local' fragility of identity construction for many members of the imagined community, the online space is turning into a long-distance fragility. For example, (The Daily Mail online, 2007) stated "the local newspaper has been bombarded with letters from historians and nature lovers declaring: There is no way we'll allow them to dig up our ancestors". Thus, constructing battles over identity through urban and online spaces positions the policy of multiculturalism in a tight spot. Therefore, showing that the construction of legitimacy and identity, whether 'traditional' or 'modern', is not an easy task and one can see this through the online space. For example:

"Yet another prime example of the English people and their religion being shunted aside for the Muslim population. I moved away from the bow area for this exact reason. No nativity play at Christmas, days off of school for Muslim religious holidays...the list just goes on and on...can't the government see why so many people are getting really angry about the unfair treatment of non Muslim's, now even our dead are not respected"

(Daily Mail online, October 11, 2007).

Comment posted by a 'Muslim' user from another space stated the following:

"This is good of the council to consider the Muslim community and people should make this point to the council but really we need our own space. We need our own area so it can be looked after and have the facilities that are befitting the religious needs of the Muslim community"

(The Northern Echo online, December 30, 2007).

These and other such comments revealed the rather hostile space of national 'community politics' that are residing in the present day. Thus, urban spaces are extremely important for imagining how nationalism is embedded in the city and through spaces of "long distance nationalism".

As individuals partake in forms of national burial conformity through the policy of multiculturalism, they also have to engage in the difference that is embedded within it. However, this is where the agony over remembering and forgetting becomes contested, for if individuals are trying to bring a colonial mentality into the urban space of London; many traditional

Muslims are trying to change the urban memories of postcolonial space that would change their status as victims, into a creation of new identities of recognition of their rights both as 'equal' citizens and as 'nationally different'. Thus, the (post)colonial ambivalence of conformity and difference although has allowed certain British Muslims to construct their identities, has nonetheless found many levels of resistance from many other members of the national community, that are losing a sense of historical consciousness in order for certain members of the British Muslims to construct their identity and legitimacy. One may then question what about British Muslims that value historical English space, such as cemeteries. I must then state, that based on my personal experience many individuals despite their difference from "traditional Muslims" still engage in funerary customs that are Islamic, thus the need for burial space is an "in between" concern for many British Muslims, not just "traditional".

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the ignored burial spaces to show one that they are embedded in many layers of historical agony that is invested into the present day politics of conformity. I have attempted to firstly show the ways in which colonial spaces are becoming re-imagined and surfaced into the everyday national space. Secondly, I have hoped to show one how members of the British Muslims are trying to construct their identities based on challenging the re-surfacing and remembrance of a colonial past, which often does not include their imagined reality and identity.

This chapter has shown why the historical space of the British Empire is crucial for an investigation of the politics of conformity and difference, especially as it can help us trace the ambiguities in present day London. I have traced the burial complexity in London, Calcutta/Kolkata, and Singapore as a way to show one the colonial patterns of conformity and the present day ones. Although each offer there own levels of conformity, perhaps reveal that the national spaces in the present are bringing a re-surfacing of the buried colonialism into the

postcolonial present and this is especially visible through urban spaces. This is why the present day complexity of multiculturalism faces both challenges of constructing 'English' identity based on the historical past, and an attempt to re-imagine a postcolonial change by claiming access to new social imaginaries. The next chapter will further explore the ambiguities that are invested into spaces, such as mosques, which reveal many forms of social imaginaries of the past and present. Thus, to end the chapter, Ernest Renan stated, "forgetting history, or even getting history wrong are an essential factor in the formation of a nation" (Hobsbawm 1992, 3). If Renan is right, then the colonial re-surfacing of memories and the construction of legitimacy through postcolonial attempts at forgetting are becoming new forms of nationally invented traditions.

Chapter Two-Markaz Mosque & the Construction of Difference

There have been many controversies surrounding the rise of mosques across the world both in the past and present and as such this chapter on the Markaz Mosque will add to the existent literature, however like many studies the time and space is different; and as such differences will be a central theme of this chapter. This chapter will explore the ways in which the politics of difference embedded both in the colonial past and postcolonial present have shaped the “imagined communities” perception of social imaginaries. Therefore, producing a symbolic reformulation of identities through visible structures, such as mosques. Harjot Oberoi questioned, “How can a religious tradition generate solidarity and also act as a source of division”? (1994, 22). This chapter will explore that question, but frame it within religious space in order to explore the ideological meanings that are embedded within forms of difference and conformity between the general non-Muslim British community and amongst the British Islamic community.

I argue that the “public” space of the mosque is becoming positioned as a symbolic investment for national community healing, which promotes notions of conformity and difference, which can be invested with future forms of recognition politics. On the other hand the “private” Islamic space of the mosque is positioning itself as a hegemonic voice for all Muslims. Thereby, trying to create conformity both through the “local” British Islamic community and through the concept of the Islamic *ummah* (community), which produces “long-distance nationalism”. The politics of difference from the British society and the Islamic community are therefore a central concern of this chapter.

The Past & Present Architectural Imaginaries

In order to gain a better understanding on the ways in which the Markaz mosque has become embedded with notions of belonging, issues of memory and representation we need to examine the space of the Orientalists in Britain and explore ‘Islamic architecture’. Islamic architecture was a keen area of interest for many architectural orientalists, but it was often promoted as a

marker of inferiority, therefore it was essentialized. Despite the ‘inferior’ architectural space many placed ‘Islam’ under, as we have already explored some orientalists seemed to blend Islamic architecture into British, both in England and colonies, thereby creating Empire conformity. However, as the space of conformity was created difference also spread, especially through the objectification of luxury, where difference was valued.

Another important consideration is that when ‘migrants’ travelled they often brought with them their own notions of ‘modernity’. Modernity, in that sense can be tied to an interconnected element of conformity that allows one to create patterns of familiarity with something ‘new’ and ‘old’. Practices that require individuals to change their everyday lives often make them more inclined to hold on to something that they are familiar with. So, rather than feeling completely dislocated many British individuals re-created both Islamic and British design as a pattern of global conformity. This happened in other regions of the world as well. For example, in Java common patterns of Islamic architecture were blended into ‘authentic’ Javanese religious structures. Thus, rather than becoming dislocated by the religiosity of Islam entering the public space, many transformed ‘Islam’ into spaces of hybrid and ‘acceptable’ patterns of architectural conformity (Kusno, 2003). There are other cases of architectural conformity, however, it is best now to show how many orientalists influenced such patterns, while creating notions of difference in many private imaginations.

Many Orientalists created visible space for ‘Islam’ as we examined in the previous chapter, but the space created by the Oriental architects was largely catered by the demands coming from the objectification of luxury. In Britain, Owen Jones, was quite influential in designing many hybrid structures where Islamic architecture became the new ‘commodity’ of the elites. He designed the interior of the Crystal Palace and other structures in Britain with ‘exotic’ Islamic architecture; this therefore became part of ‘architectural modernity’, despite it being ‘Islamic’. The Victorian era was quite important, for this is when the religion of Islam became

seen as something valuable through the spaces of Britain. Even as many incorporated Islamic influence in British spaces, the architecture of the so-called Orient often became a 'real' reflection of the peoples of the country (Crinson, 1996). Hence, architecture became perceived as something exotic, traditional and different. Jones, was also part of designing some of the structures for the great exhibitions of Britain, which showed Islam to the 'world' by re-creating an Islamic atmosphere. This newfound atmosphere allowed many upper-class individuals to gain an appreciation for understanding new trends. Thus, the objectification of luxury was created through acquiring a new exotic taste, which could be afforded by the tastes of the 'elites'. For example, "the Crystal Palace was only the largest and most obvious site for understanding Islam; in fact, detailed imitations of Islamic architecture became especially popular in its aftermath" (Crinson 1996, 65). Thus, showing the ways in which many British individuals tried to re-create religious space that was reflected through the gaze of the enlightenment.

Mark Crinson provided four examples of 'famous' Islamic structures that were incorporated into the landscape of Britain, which created patterns of difference. This is quite important to examine as this shows that the religion of Islam, rather than simply the public space of architecture became incorporated into individuals' everyday lives. Hence, invisible conformity was created as many English individuals adopted new ways of viewing Islam through shared architectural spaces. The four spaces that Islam was represented other than the great exhibitions in Britain were the following: (1) 1854- The Oriental and Turkish Museum, (2) 1855-The Royal Panopticon in Leicester square, (3) 1858- Matthew Digby Wyatt's conversion of a room based on the *Diwan-i-Khas* in the Agra fort and (4) 1864- Oriental court for the South Kensington museum, present day Victoria and Albert museum (Crinson 1996, 65). The following is an image of the interior of the Royal Panopticon in the year 1855; it later became the Alhambra theatre. This image illustrates how Islamic architecture though designed as a way

to boast the empires riches, actually ended up competing with the Gothic architecture that was already in place.

Illustration 2.1 “Royal Panopticon”

Illustration 2.1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
(British History plate 34b, 2007). Royal Panopticon of Science and Art.
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=41167>

This integration of architectural styles showed that despite individuals objectifying the so-called Orient, they were in fact like many ‘migrants’ trying to assimilate and create a space of belonging for themselves. This often happens when encountered with something that is perceived as ‘different’ because of ones lack of knowledge and familiarity. Thus, it is best that we now examine the contested architectural design of the Markaz Mosque.

The design of the Markaz mosque was circulated in the online space as different both in terms of size and structure and as a result it was perceived as unacceptable in public space. Perhaps, this is one reason why the modernist deconstructive design that was proposed for the mosque was rejected. The group proposing the mosque are the Tablighi Jamaat and they are often placed under the category of a “fundamentalist” Islamic sect; the group will be discussed further on. For now a simplified introduction on the Markaz mosque and the culture of fear is needed. The Markaz mosque will be located in the borough of Newham, East London and it will be neighbouring the future site of the 2012 Olympics. It is proposed to be the largest mosque in Europe and the design that was rejected by the Tablighi Jamaat was it seems mainly because the

“imagined online community” expressed fears over the mosque as taking over the national identity of Britain both by its size and structure.

The past design of the mosque was created by the architecture Ali Mangera and it was based on a modernist deconstructive design. Therefore, showing that the design was trying to break with the normative “orientalist” images of mosques in Britain. And, it would have created an enigmatic identity, which would have freed members of the Tablighi Jamaat from their “traditional” image, and placed the group as “modern”. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Mangera chose to design the mosque as conforming to the pattern of a global ‘architectural modernity’. The following images are of the rejected design of the Markaz Mosque.

Illustration 2.2 Marqaz mosque design one

Illustration 2.3 Markaz mosque design two

Illustrations 2.2 and 2.3 have been removed due to copyright restrictions.
(e-architects online, 2007). Abbey Mills mosque.
http://www.e-architect.co.uk/london/abbey_mills.htm

These designs became a psychological scare for many individuals, despite the ways in which they were conforming to a familiar modernist structure. Due to the widespread fear of the design of the mosque it was rejected by the Tablighi Jamaat members and since then they have hired new architects, “Allies and Morrison” to design the Markaz Mosque, which is fairly confidential at this moment. It is therefore not known if the new architects will design either a “modern” or “orientalist” mosque. However, one has to wonder why the previous design was rejected, was it simply because of the fear of changed spaces that would reflect for many an Islamic modernity,

hence perceived as an “underdeveloped” London. In order to understand the large fears over the mosque it is best that we now travel to Jakarta, Indonesia.

Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia designed the Istiqlal mosque, also known as the “Friday mosque” based on the imagined idea that it would transform the national space into one that was modern and progressive (Kusno, 2000). The mosque is the largest in South East Asia, and it is similar to the Markaz mosque, which is also hoping to be the largest, but in Europe. The Friday mosque was based on the transformation of a new imagined reality, which although was embedded in a political visibility of nation building and formations of social identities, also showed an element of the culture of fear towards public religiosity and nationalism.

Although the majority of ‘Indonesians’ are Muslim, the public religiosity of ‘other’ individuals is not as visible simply because of the magnitude of the Friday mosque, which represents Jakarta as an Islamic space. Thereby, interconnected to the fear over the Markaz mosque, which is represented in the online space as taking over the space of the gothic churches of London. Thus, showing that the landscape will become different and imagined as an “under-development”, despite the ‘modern’ space it seeks to possess with its architectural expressions. This is important because the fear over the Markaz mosque is embedded in notions that the mosque will take over the sacred gothic architecture of historical churches. For example:

“The mosque will be bigger than St. Paul’s! The plan is for the mosque to be so big that people flying in from the whole world for the 2012 Olympics will see it as the biggest landmark in London, bigger than St. Paul’s, Westminster Abbey, or Wembley stadium”

(Evening Standard online, 2007).

The following is an image of the Friday mosque, if one looks closely one will see the Roman-Catholic church of Jakarta, better known as “*Gereja Katedral Jakarta*”. The church is gothic in design, symbolizing the influence of British architecture.

Illustration 2.4 Istiqlal Mosque and Gereja Katedral Jakarta

Illustration 2.4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
(Flickr online, 2007). HKmPUA. 2007. Istiqlal Mosque.
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hleung/2106017270/>

Thus, in a rather eerie reflection Jakarta's 'modern' mosque and symbolically 'invisible' church are somewhat the reflection of what the "imagined community" fear for London's changing urban space. The only difference seems to have been that the Markaz mosque would have been asserting its difference from the 'traditional' mosque styles by conforming to 'modern British' architecture; hence the fear of not being able to differentiate the mosque from 'English' space. Therefore, symbolizing the ways in which concrete spaces are ideologically embedded in the struggle for individuals to find a place of belonging both with the city and its "imagined community".

In present day individuals are struggling with the question of how to re-create British Muslim identity. One of the concerns of the nation-state has been of integrating British Muslims into the larger national values and turning individuals into proper "British citizens". This is perhaps one reason why the state is investing in many 'government funded' mosques that are appearing in many locations, especially Universities. There is also the Aga Khan institute, which at times faces similar levels of contestation, however both the government funded and Aga Khan mosque projects are not within the gaze of deviance. Therefore, the Tablighi Jamaat is faced with the challenge of designing a 'suitable' mosque through the policy of multiculturalism that

both places them outside the gaze of deviance while trying to propagate the myth of creating proper “British citizens”. Thus, the Markaz mosque is an attempt to create a national ideological message that would position them outside the gaze of deviance. For example:

“The idea behind the creation of mosques, and the building styles they adopt, represents the function of the postcolonial state in its attempt to articulate the basic Indonesian values (the nation as a metaphysical guidance for identity) and how to be a good national subject today. Yet the extent to which these architectural visions are actually absorbed as messages is the difficult question and one that is unsettling”

(Kusno 2000, 4).

The ‘modernist’ design that was rejected by the imagined community has shown that the national messages the Tablighi Jamaat were trying to weave in through the design were not acceptable as national ideological messages. Thus, if the Markaz mosques ‘modernist’ design was rejected by the imagined public then it must have conveyed a message that individuals perceive the Tablighi Jamaat as ‘traditional’ not ‘modern’. Therefore, the ‘architectural visions’ embedded into the Markaz mosque are indeed unsettling. If the new architects Allies and Morrison design the mosque in a similar modernist form it will reflect the ways in which the Tablighi Jamaat members are handling multiculturalism very carefully. Thereby, showing that claims and access to the politics of recognition through ‘minority’ rights is indeed sought out through urban space. In order to gain a better understanding on the contestations over mosques, it is best to look into the mirror of the past for it will reveal many similar contestations over the presence of mosques in Britain. Despite the policy of multiculturalism embedded in Britain it seems that the past is still embodied in struggles over contemporary issues of national identity production.

The Arrival of the Mosques

If the earliest built forms reflect the national politics in the air, then the earliest mosques in Britain are important to explore. The first mosque in Britain was the Liverpool mosque and Muslim institute, 1887; and the second mosque was the Shah Jehan mosque in Surrey, better known as the Woking mosque, 1889. Both mosques not only represented conformity through

Empire spaces, but also became embedded in difference, as they became part of the unwanted sacred spaces in the city and suburbs. Eric Hobsbawm stated, “inventing traditions, is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past if only by imposing repetition” (1997, 4). The controversies surrounding these mosques were based on the *azan* (call to prayer) and domes, as they were feared as taking over the space of national expression of Christianity by inventing traditions of their own.

Invented traditions of urban planning and architectural design then became ritualized into forms of national remembrance. Many ‘local’ individuals pushed for mosques to not have any form of domes or *azans*, even though they were an invented ‘Islamic’ tradition. Perhaps, the reason why many were threatened by the mosques was because oriental knowledge often excluded many individuals from its elite “intellectual” space. Therefore, social attitudes were invented that positioned ‘Islamic architecture’ as outside the national imagination of ‘English’ space. Although the Liverpool mosque eventually closed down the Shah Jehan mosque remains and as such it will be examined first.

The Shah Jehan mosque made possible by G.W. Leitner, raised issues of architectural difference through its controversial dome. The placement of domes was a popular Islamic style that represented patterns of conformity with a ‘global’ Islam. Yet, it was contested because it was visibly represented as a Christian space. For example, “*The Building News* reported the great controversy has ensued because the mosque...has a dome...as many aver that domes are only admissible over tombs or commemorative monuments!” (Naylor and Ryan 2003, 177). Thus, domes may have become imagined to be a symbolic element tied to the psychological reality of being British. This aspect of perceived ‘mimicry’ was not acceptable through the imagined boundaries of urban space; nonetheless, the dome was never removed. According to the Shah Jehan mosque website 2008, “the purpose of the Institute was to enable visiting dignitaries from India to stay and study in culturally sympathetic surroundings. It also enabled Europeans being

posted to India to learn the language and culture”. Many individuals had converted to Islam because of its establishment and influence. Thus, the culture of fear surrounding the space of the mosque became one of the first instances of fear over the ‘Islamization of space’ in Britain.

In present day according to “rumour” both online and off, there are over one thousand mosques in Britain. And as such many individuals, such as Ziauddin Sardar a well-known British Muslim journalist wrote an article in *Newstatesmen*, 2008 claiming that the mosques in Britain (including the past design for the Markaz mosque) are ‘ugly’. Perhaps, then the lack of aesthetic appeal towards British mosques is a result of the past. Even though multiculturalism has allowed many ‘traditional’ individuals to express their identities there are certain ‘rules’ over the ways in which they can be visually expressed. For example:

“Hodgins noted that the application of Muslims to develop purpose built premises were ‘submitted to pressure for them not to look like mosques’, with some applications being granted permissions on the conditions that they had neither domes nor minarets, whilst others were refused because their designs were considered too eastern”

(Gale 2005, 1176).

Thus, the image of the dome became a visible marker of ‘British’ identity that was not to be incorporated into an Islamic built space; which was considered as not belonging in the national space of the “imagined community”.

The same culture of fear was embedded in the Liverpool mosque through the *azan*. Fear led individuals to claim a specific form of modernity that positioned ‘migrants’ domains as ‘traditional’ because of the threat of such spaces eroding the modernity that was in place through ‘British values’. Therefore, the gated community kept a watchful eye on ensuring such spaces remained publicly silent and outside the national borders of British identity. As the Liverpool mosque was the first to try to embed the *azan*, many individuals responded by assaulting the *muezzin* (individual who performs the *azan*) (Naylor and Ryan, 2003). Thus, the space of the past was not able to make room for a visible identity construction. Since the aftermath of the

Rushdie affair many are now challenging the politics of inclusion and exclusion by claiming access over public expressions of identity both through bodily practice and urban space.

The ghost of the unwanted *azan* has not left us in present day contestations over space. Many letters were sent to the Birmingham city council arguing against the *azan* to be allowed in public space. For example, “the comments argued that Muslims will become too prominent and they could become victims of heightened racial tension” (Gale 2005, 1167). This is interesting as it shows that hegemonic forms of domination of the ‘other’ are produced in order to reverse the psychological discomfort of individuals moving into a space that is perceived as a gated community. Perhaps, the *azan* also symbolizes the private space coming into the public street where social life is monitored. For example, James Holston stated “the consequent displacement of social life from outdoor public “rooms” of streets to indoor malls encourages a privatizing of social relations” (1999, 162). Thus, the *azan* and the space of the mosque can almost be imagined like a ‘mall’, but the only real difference is that in present day the *azan* is challenging the privatized outdoor space. Thus, showing the ghost of the *azan* has returned, but with a voice.

As multiculturalism promotes the representation of majority and minority politics, many Muslims argued that in a multicultural society they have a right to the *azan* because the same applies to church bells as being a call to prayer for Christians. However, in response many individuals declared the *azan* as different, thereby, inferior to bells. For example, “bells are rather musical, beautiful, and natural instruments whereas the idea of a voice calling the faithful to prayer is anything but aesthetic” (Gale 2005, 1168). The *azan* is therefore an interesting realm of ‘architectural modernity’, for it shows that bells are regarded as ‘modern’ whereas the *azan* is regarded as ‘traditional’ thus, inferior. As many members of the British Muslims engage in forms of recognition politics, they may be able to change urban spaces through access over rights to difference. Thus, why multiculturalism is agonizing for many individuals, for if such religious

rights are granted through urban space to “traditional Muslims”, what will happen to the ‘secular’ and religious space that is promised to the rest of the individuals of the nation.

Private Bodies

As the Markaz mosque makes its claims over urban space it will ideologically carry forth the symbolic identity of the Tablighi Jamaat members. The culture of fear over the Tablighi Jamaat has largely been the result of the groups perceived ‘privacy’ and large-scale media coverage, which represents the group as ‘suspicious’ as they conform to their own versions of Islamic identity expression. Despite, such “public” coverage individuals are nonetheless able to construct their identities through the opening in multiculturalism. However there was one trauma that left the construction of their identities in a fragile spot and that was the London bombings 7/7, this will be explored further on. The crucial question for us to explore at this moment is, who are the Tablighi Jamaat?

In 1926, North India, Maulana Mohammed Ilyas founded the Tablighi Jamaat and the grass roots movement has grown ever since in both size and popularity amongst diverse individuals from all over the world. Thus, the reason why the Markaz mosques’ hybrid name is also the *Masjid-e-Ilyas*. If one would like a more critical understanding of the roots of the movement it would be best to review the critical work carried out by Mumtaz Ahmad, 1991; for ‘we’ are just exploring a simplified introduction to help us understand the members of the group and their enigmatic identities, which will be symbolically invested into the Markaz mosque. The Tablighi Jamaat has strong guidelines that were developed by Ilyas that many members actively engage in. For example, the following ‘six guidelines’ are worth understanding as they apply to the group’s socio-cultural reality of the everyday.

1. Recite and know the *shahadah* (There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is the prophet).
2. Say *Salat* (obligatory ritual prayers).
3. Learn the basic teachings of Islam and do *dhikr* (ritual remembrance of Allah).
4. Pay respect and be polite to fellow Muslims, which is effective for *da’wa* (charity) work.
5. Take time from worldly pursuits and tour areas away from home as groups to do *da’wa* work.

6. Inculcate honesty and sincerity in purpose. Tasks should be performed for the sake of Allah not for worldly gain.

(Ahmad 1991, 514).

From these guidelines one can gain a better understanding on the group, but the question to consider is would individuals based on this simplified introduction be considered “fundamentalists”?

There is a critical discourse on “fundamentalism” and according to such standards the Tablighi Jamaat is a fundamentalist group. However, it is important not to ‘fear’ the category of fundamentalism that the ‘media’ has often circulated within the culture of fear. For, without taking some time to understand the ideological meanings invested into the category of “religious fundamentalism” leads to a harmful portrayal. It is best then that we gain a very simplified introduction on characteristics of such “fundamentalists”. For example:

“they may well consider that they are adopting the whole of the pure past, but their energies go into employing those features which will best reinforce their identity, keep their movement together, build defences around its boundaries, and keep others at some distance”

(Martin and Appleby 1991, ix).

This helps in understanding how the Tablighi Jamaat members have come to develop a strong organization in the public space as being rather ‘private’. However, the London bombings and the construction of the Markaz mosque have shifted their ‘private’ identities into public ones. They are hence trying to change their identities from “traditional” into “modern”. Perhaps, this is one reason why the design of the past mosque chose to represent this ambivalence in their identity construction. Now that we have a simplified introduction on the group, let us explore the reasons behind making the Markaz mosque in Newham, East London, especially since they have already established one of the largest mosques in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.

Urbanization of Newham

The Markaz mosque will be situated in Newham, East London, the area has been home to many ethnic groups and as can be expected it is not the most valuable in London. However, the area seems to be undergoing a rapid phase of “development” for not only will the mosque contribute

to an urbanization of the area, but so will the 2012 Olympics, which will be held in Newham, neighbouring the Markaz mosque. Thus, both sites reflect the ambiguities of nation building that are crucial to investigate.

The attempts of modernizing the Newham area in order to clear it of its “working class” image is being constructed both by the state and the Tablighi Jamaat, although both are producing their own visions of “development” for the area. The state is doing so by developing the 2012 London Olympics in Newham and the Tablighi Jamaat through the construction of the Markaz mosque. Thus, both are engaged in various forms of nation and religious building in Newham. The Markaz mosque development however will have an entrance way connected to the West Ham tube station, which will be used as a route to the Olympic site. Thereby, suggesting how infrastructure is used as a method to conduct silent politics. Many individuals have claimed through the online space that the reason why this mosque is proposing to be the largest in Europe is because of the Olympics. Although the Olympics will be important for the development of the mosque, the Tablighi Jamaat purchased the site in 1996, without any prior knowledge of the future Olympics. Nonetheless, both spaces suggest the many hidden layers of political ideologies embedded through urbanization.

The Markaz mosque will contribute alongside the Olympics to a rapid urbanization and ‘beautification’ of the Newham area. Currently the future site of the Markaz mosque is contaminated by nuclear waste that was found to be a medium-high level of risk. Members are at the moment involved in making the land safe for the future development of the Markaz mosque. However, currently there is a temporary mosque occupying the safe portion of land. The following are images of the temporary mosque *Masjid-E-Ilyas* (Markaz mosque).

Illustration 2.5 Temporary Mosque

Illustration 2.6 Entrance Gate

Illustrations 2.5 has been removed due to copyright restriction.
(Flickr online, 2008). Pope, Nina. 2008.
Current Mosque on the Abbey Mills site.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/nina_pope/2399120636/

Illustration 2.6 has been removed due to copyright restriction.
(Flickr online, 2008) Pope, Nina. 2008.
Entrance to the site where the new Abbey Mills Mosque will be.
http://www.flickr.com/photos/nina_pope/2398291043/.

As mentioned earlier the Rushdie affair highlighted the agony over naming and as such like individuals, buildings also carry with them many different ‘public’ names. The ‘real’ name of the mosque is Masjid-E-Ilyas. However, the well-known names of the mosque are the Markaz mosque and Abbey mills mosque, the latter is reflective of the ‘local’ area and indicative of the Tablighi Jamaat’s website name. There are also well known ‘derogatory’ names of the mosque, such as the “mega-mosque” and “monster mosque”. The monster mosque reminds one of the controversies that surrounded the “monster homes” in Vancouver, where many “Chinese” individuals from Hong Kong were accused of changing the upper-middle class area of Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale. Hence, another reflective case that shows how change is often a psychological scare for many individuals showing fear over what counts as ‘aesthetically pleasing’.

The Tablighi Jamaat members have hired a PR company, Indigo and together they have launched a highly informative website. The “abbeymillsmosque.com” website informs individuals of who they are, the plan for the site and much more. The website describes a list of open-house dates where individuals are invited to explore the site and invest into the mosque as a

“community”. One of the reasons why the new design is not revealed is because it will be decided upon as a ‘local Newham community’. However, as of 2008 the Tablighi Jamaat have proposed the following for the Markaz mosque:

1. The mosque will have a maximum capacity of 12,000. Currently the mosque hosts a weekly congregation on Thursday of approximately 3,500 people and smaller congregations during the rest of the week. These congregations have been happening for over a decade without causing significant disturbance to the local residents.
2. We are planning to provide an integral visitor conference centre. We are confident that this will be a great facility, available for local people, as well as being an integral part of the Mosque.
3. A new entrance to West Ham tube station will be built across our site. This will provide a very useful entrance, particularly as it will offer a great new route into the Olympic venue.
4. We propose a school as part of the development. Early plans suggest we can put a residential school on the site for 500 people, including outdoor playing fields. This school aims to teach students to be responsible, moral, adults to live professional lives and integrate with British society.

(abbeymillsmosque, 2008).

As one can see, the ‘local’ residents are conveniently separated from the ‘Muslim’ residents, thus showing a rather interesting dimension of the politics of difference. On the website there is also a list of features which are for “residents of all faiths” and for “all Muslims”. The first category suggests that a community “Peace garden” will be developed for all. And for the second group an open invitation for all members of the Islamic community every Thursday. Thereby, showing attempts at creating an Islamic conformity, which is made possible by multiculturalism.

The Markaz mosque is not a homogenous Islamic mosque however, it is trying to grasp that hegemonic space of recognition through such a representation of an “Islamic” community in public space. One rather interesting ‘fact’ the website declared, was that the reason they are developing the mosque is because there is no room left for Muslims to pray in London. The abbey mills mosque website, 2008, declared that, “1 in 12 Londoners are Muslim”. This immediately reminds one of the text by Joel Best, “Damned Lies and Statistics”. Even if these figures are accurate, they don’t really have any significance except for being publicity data. For it is important to question how many of those ‘Muslims’ are first religious, secondly ‘South

Asian', thirdly members of the Tablighi Jamaat, and lastly residents of the East London area.

However, many online spaces do reflect the reality of lack of space for praying, but one has to wonder are individuals discussing this in relation to a specific holy day that would quite easily generate a massive population. For example:

"I just want to say that the demand for a large mosque in East London is huge. Anyone in doubt of this need should visit any current mosque in Newham (eg East London Mosque, Whitechapel) on a Friday and watch how we try to cram into the building, often resorting to praying on the road outside. Those who oppose the mosque are simply scared of us "aliens"...they need to understand that Muslims are not a threat to them or their culture!"

(BBC online, 2007).

The following chart may also be problematic, but nonetheless provides a better reflection on patterns of residential segregation. Although the boroughs are not labelled on the chart, the area that has the most plots are the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham. Tower Hamlets has a significant majority of Bangladeshi individuals and Newham has a significant Pakistani population (Peach, 2006). Thus, showing one the outcome of political residential strategies used by groups, especially since the Rushdie affair.

Chart 2.1 Muslim population in London

Chart 2.1 has been removed due to copyright restriction.
(Peach 2006, 360). Peach, Ceri. 2006. Islam, ethnicity and South Asian religions in the London 2001 census. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 3:31 353-370.

In order to gain a wider degree of legitimacy for identity construction in urban space many individuals have constructed sacred space as a way to create a place in the national imagination of Britain. This will henceforth provide many forms of recognition through the

legality of Britain. Harjot Oberoi stated, “arrangements of sacred space or the conventions of body management are significant pointers both to the values a group holds for itself and which it seeks to communicate to those it sees as outsiders” (1994, 426). Oberoi is quite right as many not only represent their identities through urban space, but through bodily practice, which altogether are challenging the ‘public’ spaces of identity construction. For many though are expected to wear “traditional” clothes in private are challenging such space at a rapid rate, one only needs to reflect on the case in France over such ‘appropriate’ norms of bodily practice. Thus, in order to examine the ways in which the Markaz mosque is communicating ambivalent messages of both ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, it is best to examine the ways in which the sacred space of the Markaz mosque is used both as a form of “community healing” and “community agony”.

Community Healing

During the immediate aftermath of the London bombings (7/7), many ‘British-Muslims’ declared that they were not like the ‘fundamentalists’ that bombed the city centre. The individual linked to one of the bombings was according to various online news sites, associated with the Tablighi Jamaat. The rather indirect way the bomber Shezad Tanweer was associated with the Tablighi Jamaat was because he “visited” their mosque in Dewsbury. Hence, as the Tablighi Jamaat members were already under the gaze of deviance because of their ‘privacy’, many individuals both Muslim and non-Muslim further placed them under the gaze of surveillance. And in present day as a way to acknowledge their awareness on their “fundamentalist” identity, they have placed questions that individuals have asked them on their website. For example:

“Do you have any connections to any suicide bombers?”

“What are your links to the FBI, the French security services and other security organizations?”
(abbeymillsmosque, 2008).

Thus, showing that members of the Tablighi Jamaat are trying to construct their identities into ones that are ‘public’ and ‘modern’ by indirectly changing the fear attached to them.

The Markaz mosque will become invested in many forms of remembrance and forgetting therefore, it will become positioned as a 'silent' form of community healing. There are of course many ways in which this built space is agonizing and this will be discussed further on. For now, it is important that we investigate the site as a future form of 'national' healing and access to better forms of interpersonal relations amongst the "imagined community". Thus, it is essential to compare the horrific event of the anti-Chinese riots during the May *reformasi* of Jakarta. This will help one understand the ways in which built spaces, such as the Candra Naya (19th century Chinese built space) and Markaz mosque carry forth many powerful processes and ideologies of healing through forgetting and remembering.

Ten years have past since the traumatic event of the *reformasi*, yet there is still no form of formal recognition of the violence that was carried out; thus meanings become invested in silent built spaces that become symbolic representations of public remembrance. Whereas, in London there is a lot of public investment in remembering the bombings, yet it seems that despite forms of recognition and legal action, it is not a complete process of healing. The Markaz mosque will not be an official commemorative built space, yet in the imagined psychological reality it will become for many a place for public and private forms of silent healing. Thereby, showing that despite public monuments and awareness of tragic events, individuals' need certain built spaces as a method of community healing, rather than simply 'gardens' or plaques as a form of commemorating tragedies. Thus, it is interesting to compare the future Markaz mosque with the Candra Naya, which has the possibility of such a project of community healing.

Even though there is an attempt to 'forget' the riots in Jakarta, this won't be possible if the Candra Naya reclaims its access over 'forgotten memories'. Although the built space is facing threats of either being repositioned to another location or being demolished to make room for 'modern' space; it deserves some attention for if it is removed, who will carry the burden of such memories? The Markaz mosque, like the Candra Naya is invested in many silent memories

that mark the traumatic event of 7/7 for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, it occupies like the Candra Naya a fragile space. For the Candra Naya and the future mosque were not built for any form of public commemorative purpose, yet they are both invested with such meaning. Therefore, the “unspoken desires for justice, forgiveness, and relief” (Kusno 2003, 177) are naturalized into the spaces of the Candra Naya and Markaz mosque. The following image of the Candra Naya shows the ways in which it is now stuck between spaces of remembrance and forgetting. The Markaz mosque has the opportunity to heal while becoming stuck between memory and change for unlike the Candra Naya it is the one responsible for “developing” memories and changes through “urbanization”. Both buildings although are different geopolitical spaces, nonetheless show the symbolic ideologies invested in built spaces.

Illustration 2.7 Candra Naya



(Kusno 2003, 162).

It seems then that unlike the Candra Naya, which remains unfortunately ‘closed’, the Markaz mosque has opened its doors to ‘public’ healing. However, in order to push for larger methods of healing it is best to change the political structures as a method for creating macroscopic and microscopic healing and understanding for the future. As already investigated the Markaz mosque is going to have a school that engages in the national curriculum and a peace

garden. Tariq Modood stated, “the states role is as much to help ensure that Muslim civil society is drawn into the mainstream as it is to enable its representation within state structures (2005, 5). Thus, the question to ask is do members of the Tablighi Jamaat count as members of civil society. For although it is clear that civil society is the “invisible hand” of the state, it is important to understand the ways in which groups are excluded from such recognition. If the Tablighi Jamaat members can be seen as part of ‘civil society’ then do they not have a right to claim public space in order to create ‘equality through citizenship’? The schools therefore provide an answer to the role that the state can play in ‘cooperating’ with civil society in order to enhance a careful national curriculum. The curriculum if changed to reflect the aims of multiculturalism will have the possibility of better forms of ‘governance’ and may even help guide the imagined community of civil society form a possible future of positive social change.

The national projects of the schools need to establish greater levels of integration that reflect the ‘policy’ of multiculturalism, for it seems that though multiculturalism is in the air it is in reality perceived as rather artificial. Though schools such as, the ones by the Tablighi Jamaat may possess a mixed curriculum with “religious” discourse, alongside the “states”; in what ways would such a curriculum conform to the national objectives of the policy of multiculturalism? If the nation-state of Britain is so eager, as one can already see to investigate Muslim peoples, then I would recommend that it start with the Markaz mosque; for it is already willing to be a “community project”. Perhaps, then Habermas’s “communicative action” will come of better use through the framework of healing through national projects of both the state and ‘civil society’.

The following are a few recommendations that may help start such a national project of understanding both forms of conformity and difference through school projects. All schools whether public or private should firstly make their own “imagined community” based on pen-pal networks amongst the students nationwide. This will create further understanding and ‘healing’ between various students, who are part of the everyday culture of fear. Secondly, there should be

an investment of a national project of multiculturalism that starts during school. For example, perhaps the complexity that faces the nation should be worked on by students as a national project and this can be achieved by working together through school ‘fieldtrips’ at contested sites, such as the Markaz mosque. If the Tablighi Jamaat’s proposed school will embed the national curriculum then the curriculum needs to be urgently emended by the nation-state, which will enable further forms of healing.

The Tablighi Jamaat has also stated that they are proposing a peace garden for all individuals, therefore providing another answer to the ways in which community healing can be achieved. Although differences are naturalized into such gardens, the one way to get around this is by changing the peace garden to reflect a space of conformity and difference. The garden needs to be invested through the realm of civil society to push for further communication between the “communities”. In order for the garden to be a place for the community, the space should reflect the overall healing agenda of ‘peace’. However, one may question how will this site be a project for “community healing” if it is embedded as a hegemonic space, claiming to represent a homogenous voice for all Muslims. How will this site create healing when clearly segregation will result based on a hegemonic build up of a Muslim community. These are all very important concerns, which I will now explore.

Community Agony

The hegemonic build up of the Islamic community through the construction of the Markaz mosque is problematic, for not only does it aim to create a ‘public’ conformity amongst Muslims through the notion of an Islamic *ummah*, but it is doing so through the process of multiculturalism. Tariq Modood stated, “we cannot have strong multicultural or minority identities and weak common or national identities” (2005, 6). Modood is quite right, but the complexity is how does one gain a national identity when “long-distance nationalism”, whether

secular or religious is claiming access over “local” spaces at a rapid rate. For a better understanding of this complexity, let us now investigate the realm of religious tourism.

The Sikhs and Hindus of London have already established the largest or well-known sacred spaces and the only group to not have a prestigious religious space established is ‘South Asian Muslims’. Sacred spaces are becoming embedded as forms of political recognition and therefore the symbolism behind the mosque is also to create a ‘conformity’ through all British-Muslims as a method to create difference between the ‘South Asians’ and wider community in order to engage in wider access to the legal structure of Britain. Abidin Kusno stated, “cities are turning into fields of social, cultural, and national identity production” (2000, 97). This is especially true as the city of London turns into a religious tourist attraction. Let us now explore the religious tourist sites.

The Swaminarayan Temple the largest ‘Hindu’ temple in Britain, faced many controversies before it was officially developed in the year 1995 in Neasden, London. The *mandir* (temple) was originally supposed to be constructed at Harrow, but because of so much opposition the members were not ‘allowed’ to build the structure in that area. For example:

“for a number of local residents the mandir was a visual sign of intrusion into and invasion of a predominantly white British space...the erection of a Hindu mandir at the heart of London’s suburbia represents a dramatic development amidst mundane residential properties, yet one that nonetheless ties the geography of this space to long historical processes of empire and global cultural exchange”
(Naylor and Ryan 2003, 177-178).

The Hindu temple was built by using “sacred” material that was imported from India. Therefore, showing the ways in which urban spaces are occupying “long-distance nationalism” in its everyday realities. The Hindu temple has become a major tourist attraction in recent years, thus symbolizing another ‘great exhibition’ that the world can come to see. Therefore, Hinduism has become represented within the frameworks of the ‘reality’ of British multiculturalism through architectural public space. The next religion to become part of the visible representation of multiculturalism in Britain was Sikhism.

The next largest religious space in Europe for members of the South Asians was the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara built by the Sikhs residing in Southall, West London, which ‘officially’ opened in the year 2003. This is the only site that seems to have gone through no controversy, why is this? Is it because of the historical symbolism behind this site that would have been hard to challenge. The *gurdwara* was symbolic of the first religious centre that was created in the past. Only now the magnitude of the “sacred space” serves as a marker of the ‘success’ of the ‘Sikh community’ in integrating into British multiculturalism. The only online press coverage it seems to have received was positive; perhaps this also has to do with the fact that nobody wants to argue with ‘royalty’. For example, Prince Charles visited the site when it opened and the BBC online, 2003 quotes him by stating, “the Sikh community in Britain is a vital part in the modern multicultural life of this country”. Therefore, the Sikh community has ‘officially’ become part of the public space of architectural representation of a multicultural Britain and yes it has also become a popular tourist site.

There is no large or well-known mosque that is capable of representing and competing with the “religious tourism” of the other South Asian religious buildings. Thus, another reason why the Markaz mosque is needed. For example:

“When a group of us touring London mosque’s came to the Tabligh centre a courteous young man explained that at this mosque “there is nothing to see” for that we should go to the (Saudi supported) London mosque in Regent’s Park”

(Metcalf 1996, 11).

Hence, through the Markaz mosque many can claim ‘multicultural’ space and visibility as recognized members of the British landscape. Thus, reinforcing public differences and access to the politics of recognition becomes a necessary tactic.

Although the Markaz mosque may benefit from the tourist construction, it will nonetheless be an agonizing space for many Muslims. For, the Tablighi Jamaat can claim a hegemonic voice through representing their versions of Islam especially to, ‘religious tourists’.

“Islamist ideologies, no less than extreme secularism, can be a problem not because they are religious but because they divide people into two (Muslims and non-Muslims) and because they tend towards absolutism” (Modood, 6). Perhaps, in order to solve this complexity the branches of civil society need to find a way to develop an “Islamic community” that will show the many forms of differences that exist within. This can perhaps be achieved by cooperating with the Tablighi Jamaat, as they have already stated a proposal to develop a peace garden and conference facility for all. Thus why not take them up on their ‘promise’ and create a way to integrate differences within their attempts of conformity. For example, the peace garden with the push from branches of civil society, such as the Muslim council of Britain, can ask that such gardens be reflective of Islamic differences rather than a homogenous portrayal of all British Muslims thereby reflecting the plural realities.

The last complexity that needs to be investigated is the build up of a hegemonic Islamic community within the space of Newham. Segregation is clearly a huge concern and as such it was one of the reasons for the Bradford Riots of 2001. Therefore, London needs to be careful in its ‘urban planning and development’. The Tablighi Jamaat as mentioned earlier is widespread in the world, so rather than becoming just a “South Asian Muslim” mosque they may attract many other followers of the sect. Thereby, creating conformity through “long-distance nationalism” both through the global concept of the Islamic *ummah* and of the Tablighi Jamaats’ membership. It seems likely then that segregation will be a future problem, thus ‘we’ need to plan for different strategies to combat such “invisible apartheid”. Although the London 2012 Olympics may seem like a possible solution to create levels of ‘community cohesion’, as already examined it carries with it its own political agenda. This unfortunately seems to be the story with the arrival of the Olympics in many parts of the world. How then does one create a ‘multicultural’ community if individuals are involved in the politics of difference by conforming to a hegemonic representation as “British-Muslims”?

One way to solve the segregation level is then to implement forms of “community cohesion” that is based on the reality of urbanization and religion changing the landscape of Newham. Perhaps, then the Malay/Indonesian concept of *gotong royong*, roughly translated into “joint bearing of burdens/mutual cooperation” through the “village environment” needs to be consciously applied along with the policy of multiculturalism (Geertz, 1985). For many individuals in the Newham area are already as many ‘migrants’ searching for forms of belonging; thus, the ‘village environment’ somewhat already exists, but not with everyone, this is why segregation is a future concern. During Sukarno’s regime he embedded the concept of the *gotong royong* through re-imagining that the village sociality and cooperation would become part of the urban areas, through a ‘urban *kampung*’ (village) (Kusno, 2000). This was not successful as the state gained an abusive form of political power by altering the concept into something completely different. If one was to place the concept of *gotong royong* in Newham, civil society needs to engage in this ‘careful project’, rather than the nation-state. This way identity is constructed within the boundaries of multiculturalism, but it would be monitored by the branches of civil society that would create a national consciousness of ‘*gotong royong*’ with all residents of the area. This is just one idea and I am sure that the reader can reflect on wider solutions to address the plague of segregation.

Conclusion

This chapter has endeavoured one to re-think the ways in which the politics of difference are brought to the everyday urban space. C.A. Bayly stated, “cities became great stages on which were played the dramas of popular and radical politics” (2004, 193). The past has shown one that despite attempts of Empire conformity many ‘local’ individuals resisted such ‘intellectual’ attempts to change their imagined reality of the everyday in the city. Therefore, showing that change is a psychological scare for many individuals and if individuals are left out of the exclusive space of understanding ‘modernity’ then individuals will always want to hold on to

forms of belonging. The online spaces have proven that the threat of change has been embedded in the present day over the Markaz mosque, but what is now urgent to consider is that members of the Tablighi Jamaat are constructing their identities of fear to a homogenous form of Muslim identity, which will become a form of imagined healing. Yet for many British Muslims this is a tragedy as it sheds individuals of their diversity in order to construct a hegemonic form of Muslim identity.

The Markaz mosque is capable of generating the ‘great divergence’ of conformity and difference onto a more equitable meeting space. However, it must be carefully done while ensuring that forms of conformity and difference are not completely separated from one another’s reality. There are ways to deconstruct differences while enabling forms of identity construction and legitimacy through the policy of multiculturalism. The Tablighi Jamaat have shown that they are ‘willing’ to open up the Markaz as a community project, then why not use this to engage in wider forms of social change. It is best then to end this chapter with the words of Lucien Febvre, “Religion? What a crude word you are using there! Are you going to get tangled up in faith, belief and all that?” (Oberoi 1994, 1). It seems then that the historical meanings embedded into the present day urban spaces have proven that we have never untangled ourselves out of religion.

Conclusion-Islamization of Space?

This thesis has endeavoured to show one the various ways in which urban spaces are an important area to investigate, especially in relation to the policy of “multiculturalism”. Nationalism, though it is imagined to be a broad encompassing reality of one political domain, has split into multiple layers. This is one reason why multiculturalism as a policy has come under the public gaze as politically unstable. Although as I have shown it’s unstable position has allowed for many individuals such as, British Muslims to carve out their identities and legitimacy. However, online space reveals that many perceive this identity construction as a loss of ‘English’ nationality. Thus, concrete space plays a significant role in sustaining memories and mobilizing discourse and online space gives voice and meaning to that concrete reality.

The aims and questions that I had stated in the beginning and throughout this thesis have hoped to be answered throughout the chapters. The ‘truth’ that I have presented to one throughout this complexity has been based on my experience and observations. It is hoped that the reader has understood that rather than simply searching for answers based on an ‘absolute truth’ it is best to be cautiously aware of the many layers of “truth” that exist. The overall aim was to show that urban spaces hold many ideological meanings that are often overlooked, but clearly are important for the study of “multiculturalism” and thus why the politics of conformity and difference that are embedded in the past and present are important to examine. If by chance the thesis produces forms of local and global understanding on the importance of concrete space for the project of nationalism and multiculturalism, then it would have achieved a purpose. At the end of Abidin Kusno’s work, 2000, he stated his hoped for purpose was that individuals in Indonesia would, “learn to live together, rigorously, but also with self reflection and understanding” (206). His words are therefore carried on in this thesis, as it is hoped that individuals in Britain and other parts of the world will find a way to engage in methods of understanding in order to produce positive forms of social change.

The chapters have each offered their own versions of complexity in relation to the politics of conformity and difference both in the past and present. The first chapter on burial politics has shown how conformity became a tool for both the state and individuals that are contesting urban space through recognition politics. The historical myth making process of nationalism has therefore become embedded into the everyday realities of contesting space. For many cemeteries are now embedded in an “invented tradition” of national belonging through positive memories of a historical remembrance. However, for many individuals and nation states the memories of such myths invokes agony for many ‘postcolonial’ individuals as they are looking for ways to shed their ‘victim’ identity into ones that carry forth memories of change and recognition. Thus, showing that the colonial relations of group inequalities have become embedded in our postcolonial realities of multiculturalism.

The second chapter on the Markaz mosque has shown the ways in which the politics of difference embedded into concrete and online space carries forth many ideological values that give reality to the many levels of healing and agony. I attempted to show one that built spaces are critical to pay attention to for they carry with them many powerful values for “ordinary people”, civil society, and the nation-state. The Markaz mosque is therefore an enigmatic case, for it is capable of producing a form of belonging through national healing, while at the same time reclaiming recognition by claiming a hegemonic space for all ‘British Muslims’. Eric Hobsbawm stated, “the development of nations and nationalism within old established states such as Britain and France has not been studied very intensively, though it is now attracting attention...the existence of this gap is illustrated by the neglect, in Britain, of any problems connected with English nationalism” (1993, 11). Thus, both chapters have aimed to show that though English nationalism is important, there are now many other layers of nationalism that exist within its local space such as, long distance nationalism.

“Long-Distance Nationalism”

Long-distance nationalism was used throughout this thesis to provide one with an understanding that such imagined interconnections are not ‘new’, but they are a product of the past. Benedict Anderson’s study on “long-distance nationalism” examines the ways in which nationalism arose through capitalism and long distance transportation both of migrants and movable print culture. He writes, “in general, today’s long-distance nationalism strikes one as a probably menacing portent for the future” (1998, 74). Anderson has predicted accurately and I have examined this aspect of nationalism through concrete and online space, both of which play a significant role in issues of memory and belonging. Therefore, the connection that exists between urban and online space have contributed to a new discourse in the present, which enables one to examine the symbolic historical traditions that have become part of the everyday.

The idea of capitalism producing new and wider ranges of nationalism is especially ‘true’, as examined in the chapter on burial politics. The historical cemetery spaces in various parts of the world are now becoming positioned in the realm of ‘parks’ in order to re-create a sense of belonging through memories of ‘colonial happiness’. Thus, cemeteries are becoming part of the everyday culture of positive surroundings, rather than as symbols of forgetting and remembering the changes brought forth by urbanization, such as ‘migration’. This process is achieved through capitalism, which invests numerous capital into sustaining such memories and keeping the burial grounds under a positive ‘beautification’ of memories, rather than an image of decay. Thus, the Tower Hamlets cemetery, South Park Street cemetery, Bukit Brown and Choa Chu Kung cemetery all create new ways of engaging in processes of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ through capitalism. In present day the airlines have also made a considerable profit over shipping the dead because of unequal price gaps in the boroughs of London. Perhaps, this will become a “invented tradition” of the future through time. Thus, many spaces are producing in there own ways forms of long-distance nationalism.

Andersons' idea on migrants is crucial for further cross-comparison on the state of flux of belonging. He stated, "the locomotive had begun its world-historical mission of transporting millions of rural villagers into urban slums" (1998, 63). This has therefore created room for the construction of identities because such slums attract many individuals from the same 'long-distance neighbourhood'. As migrants move to metropolitan areas, which is widely believed to be the trend, the East London area will become a further 'slum'. The London Olympics and the Markaz mosque have the potential to change the area, but it is not known, if it will provide a chance for Newham to gain a 'second-birth' through urbanization or worsen the present living conditions in the 'slums'. It seems likely that this area will attract many 'Muslim migrants' in the near future, which will threaten the sense of belonging for many 'others'. Hence, segregation may result unless certain ideologies are consciously emended, which recognize the effects of spatial and temporal meanings. Thus, perhaps, then it is best that cross-cultural solutions be gained from other parts of the world.

The online space plays a critical role in giving reality to urban space. Anderson examined how print capitalism and the radio strengthens discourses of nationalism, but in present day the Internet plays even a greater role in sustaining memories and strengthening nationalism. For the controversies surrounding burial politics and the Markaz mosque can be read online, watched, and listened to courtesy of the youtube 'videos of fear'. The culture of fear is therefore prominent in online spaces, which are not as 'monitored' by the state. Therefore, pushing for the policy of integration to be adopted as it is imagined to engage in patterns of conformity with an imagined English nationality. Thus, multiculturalism although promotes both conformity and difference is seen as an agonizing reality; whereas for some members of the British Muslims multiculturalism has given reality to their processes of identity construction and legitimacy.

Sacred Space

If the “Islamization of space” is understood to be ‘real’ then how will this affect and change the policy of multiculturalism? After the Rushdie affair many British Muslims changed the legality of Britain not by solely ‘direct’ action, but ‘indirect’ action through tactics such as, residential patterns. The postcolonial ambivalence of conformity and difference, which underlies the policy, seems to then have generated many forms of unequal conditions. Despite, many British Muslims who have carved out their identities through the policy, it has left out many members of the British Muslims. For, if many ‘traditional’ individuals are enhancing inner-group conformity through the artificial category of “British Muslims” as a monolithic community, what then will become of the diversity that exists? For, individuals carry with them many identities that would not fit into the homogenous box of ‘British Muslim’. Not only that, but the project of nationalism has split based on a historical consciousness of English identity and a postcolonial consciousness as fighting for the chance of becoming “equal” members of a multicultural space. This ambivalence needs to be resolved for if “multiculturalism” remains it has to become a part of the shared imagined reality as citizens neither of the present or past, but of the in-between future.

The Rushdie affair, the gulf crisis, 9/11, 7/7 and perhaps even more events that I am unaware of, have generated a massive interest in trying to understand ‘Muslims’ through the religion of Islam. However, I am afraid that this often leads to an essentialist discourse, which examines Muslims and their socio-cultural and historical experience through their perceived religiosity. Edward Said stated, “What is the role of the intellectual?”(1979, 326). Is Salman Rushdie an intellectual? He has an MA in History from Kings College, Cambridge, but does this qualify him to be an intellectual? Despite the fact that he studied Islam, many individuals after the Rushdie affair claimed that he did not fully understand Islam, for if he understood Islam that would deny their pain of meaning, would it not? (Appignanesi and Maitland, 1989). Also, if many-claimed Rushdie did not understand Islam does this mean academic programmes such as,

History are not capable of producing an acceptable discourse about Islam? If this was not the case, then why are Islamic studies becoming embedded in universities throughout the world? For instance, McGill University, Canada has created an Islamic studies programme for students wishing to study 'Muslim peoples' and Islam. Oxford University has also created an Islamic studies institution. The creation of such programmes is absurd, for not only do they place the study of 'Muslim peoples' outside of the larger 'Asian' studies department, but they re-create a myth that Muslim peoples need to be separately understood. Thus, the creation of mosques and 'centres' mimic the national myths of understanding Muslims, solely through the framework of Islam. That is why the Markaz mosque and burials may be a threat, in terms of the brittle categories that are further attached and reproduced.

In summary, the complexity that exists in the landscape of Britain revolving British Muslims cannot be understood without paying attention to firstly the 'global' world and secondly a historical awareness of the memories that are invested into concrete space. Unfortunately, urban space has often been ignored while trying to understand the policy of multiculturalism and nationalism. However, there are thinkers who have paved a way for one to understand such a complexity through a theoretical framework. I have addressed the complexities of the historical and present day contestations over concrete and online space by relying on the framework provided by Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Abidin Kusno. Anderson's contribution was particularly important in relation to "long distance nationalism", Hobsbawm provided one with insights into the 'reality' of nationalism as a politically conscious project that is getting stronger in present day and Kusno's idea of investigating the ignored urban space as a site where nationalism exists in the social imaginaries of the everyday have all been important for this thesis. Future research is therefore needed that explores the ways in which the ignored, yet quite visible concrete structures shape the way the nation is politically and culturally re-imagined both locally and globally.

I have examined the ways in which the tension and cooperation that exists between the postcolonial ambivalent of conformity and difference has enabled many members of the British Muslims to legitimize and construct their identities. However, their identity construction has provoked many members of the “imagined community” to engage in legitimizing their own versions of identity through a ritual remembrance of the past. Thus, I have examined the ignored spaces of burials and mosques to show one that the historical memories of the colonial past are embedded in the postcolonial present both in Britain and beyond. The case studies have demonstrated that urban spaces reveal many symbolic ideologies that are important for the study of “multiculturalism” and if they are continuously ignored, then I am afraid that unequal national policies may become a key concern for the future, would you not agree? It is best then to end this thesis with the words of Marshall Bermann, “I believe that we and those who come after us will go on fighting to make ourselves at home in this world, even as the homes we have made, the modern street, the modern spirit, go on melting into air” (1988, 348). As urban spaces and the modern meanings attached to them go on melting into the air, the ‘traditional’ spirit nonetheless stays behind.

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