Yemeni, Muslim, and Scouse:
Ethnicity and Religion, Hybridity and Locality
in Contemporary Liverpool

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Declaration

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

British-Yemenis have received little attention, scholarly or otherwise, in the contemporary context of the UK. Similarly, there are few ethnographically-informed studies focusing on contemporary Liverpool despite the region's rich histories of migration and its numerous diaspora groups. Addressing these gaps, this thesis presents an ethnographic study of contemporary Liverpool-Yemeni life based on fifteen months of fieldwork during 2017 and 2018. The focus is primarily upon the constructions and performances of everyday Liverpool-Yemeni identities among the post-migration generation who continuously negotiate the diasporic tension of 'roots' and 'routes'. Adapting Gerd Baumann's framework of 'the multicultural triangle' to account for dimensions of translocality, Liverpool-Yemenis' multiple belongings are explored along ethnic, national/local, and religious lines.

The key finding of the thesis is that while second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis largely do not mobilise politically as an ethno-national 'community' to enact change in the homeland, 'Yemeniness' nonetheless retains salience in the production and performances of an aesthetic diaspora, which is rooted in the translocal family beyond the gaze of the institutions of wider society, yet also negotiated alongside multiple other belongings.

While subjective 'Yemeniness' is rarely politicised, the milieu of L8 with its long history within Liverpool as a multi-ethnic locality provides an important, alternative space of belonging and engagement beyond family networks. In the context of this neighbourhood, processes of organic hybridisation and practices of demotic cosmopolitanism give rise to increasingly confident articulations of 'Scouse-Yemeniness'.

Additionally, Islam and Muslim identifications are more often articulated as inseparable from participants' subjective 'Yemeniness'. Yemen and Yemeni culture are instead reclaimed as legitimately 'Islamic', particularly against perceived Saudi antagonisms. Islam is also seen to provide a shared, but not de-culturated, form of belonging extending beyond ethnic ties in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

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Introduction

Introduction

Avtar Brah in her seminal *Cartographies of Diaspora* writes that:

> the identity of a diasporic imagined community is far from fixed or pre-given. It is constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life; in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively. (1996: 181)

It is these everyday stories and experiences which form the basis of this study in exploring how second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis construct, articulate, and perform multiple subjectivities implicated in diasporic life. Using Gerd Baumann's (1999) framework of the multicultural triangle, this thesis explores three salient and interrelated dimensions of Liverpool-Yemeni identities: the ethnicisation/hybridisation of identity, the production of imagined 'communities' along national or local lines, and the role of Islam in both reinforcing and transcending ethno-national identities. In this way, this thesis does not begin by assuming that any of 'Yemeni', 'Muslim', or 'Scouse' identities are prioritised in general terms or are more worthy of study than the other, but rather traces how these are constructed relationally in the specific contexts of 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996: 181). As the title of this thesis suggests, hyphenated 'Yemeni-Muslim-Scouse' identities have been preferred to highlight that even within such labels as 'British-Muslim' or 'British-Arab' there exist multiple histories of migration and settlement which give rise to multiple positionalities. Such a framing also problematises beginning with the nation as an analytic lens in that the many (trans)local practices, flows, and demotic discourses of the participants discussed throughout this thesis often occur below the scale of the nation. Indeed, using 'Yemeni' as a category rather than a specific regional demonym parallel to 'Scouse' is itself problematised in Chapter 4. This is not to say that the nation does not

continue to exert influence – indeed it will be seen to play an important role in shaping various aspects of Liverpool-Yemeni life. Nonetheless, an approach which recognises the importance of locality and its multiple scales both 'here' and 'there' is valuable in gaining a clearer understanding of how 'roots and routes' (Gilroy, 1993) are contextually and relationally negotiated and which, in many instances, do not take the 'nation' as a focal point. Such an approach echoes that taken by McLoughlin et al. (2014) in their edited volume *Writing the City in British Asian Diasporas*, in the introduction of which McLoughlin notes:

> This [the lived experiences of locality] must be set against glocalized systemic rhythms and fields of power, as well as competing, multiple narratives…including authoritative and influential institutional discourses. Indeed, we maintain that comparing and contrasting writing about the 'lived experience of a locality' with differently positioned texts is the proper starting point for investigating the 'contestations' and 'ironies', 'transformations' and 'confusions' that typify representations of British Asians (2014: 8, citing Brah, 1996: 192)

Using a similar approach, but drawing upon empirical ethnographic data rather than 'texts' and 'representations' (although of course this ethnography itself becomes a 'text' and 'representation'), this thesis explores these differently positioned subjectivities, lived experiences of (trans)locality, and the contrasting but often intertwined dominant and demotic discourses of culture and 'community' (Baumann, 1996). As McLoughlin (ibid., 5) further notes, 'new ethnicities' arise out of these multi-local lives, as 'Identity, belonging and embodied/emotional attachment are all generated through this intimate knowledge and memory of neighbourhoods and cityscapes', while recognising that neighbourhoods and cities are also implicated in, and produced in relation to, national/global circuits of power and dominant discourses which exist beyond their confines.

The intersection of Liverpool and specific localities within Yemen provides an exciting and original contribution to the field of diaspora studies by bringing to light a little-studied context. Both Liverpool and Yemen occupy a marginal space within their national/regional contexts, but nonetheless possess long and rich histories of migration spanning the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Emphasising these translocal modes of living as seen through the complex interaction of the three cornerstones of Baumann's (1999) multicultural triangle: ethnicity, nation (albeit problematised in this thesis as discussed above), and religion, this thesis uses a number of approaches drawing from various disciplines. One main consideration is present throughout the thesis, however – that these identities are contextual and situational. As Werbner writes:

> Postmodernists who attack essentialist constructions of 'culture' miss the fact that identities matter, deeply, and are long-term. At the same time, they are not simply pre-given or inherited: they are formed, made and remade; they exist in practice, dialogically, through collective action and interaction (2002a: 267)

To explore what it means to be 'Yemeni, Muslim, and Scouse' means also taking seriously the situated and travelling histories of Yemen, Liverpool, and Islam. In the context of diaspora space, discrete 'Yemeni', 'Muslim', and 'Scouse' identities are not produced nor articulated in isolation, but also combine through various processes of hybridisation, becoming reconfigured 'into one journey via a *confluence of narratives*'. (Brah, 1996: 180, italics original).

Motivations for the Research

My own experiences growing up in a strongly working-class region of North Liverpool have been a major motivating factor behind this research, and indeed my academic trajectory as a whole. Early encounters with Chinese and Yemeni peers during my school

years and the presence of a Yemeni newsagents opposite the family home sparked an intense (and somewhat atypical) interest in language and 'culture' – so much so that as a child I enrolled in a weekend-school run by a local Chinese community centre in the late 1990s where I eventually gained a GCSE and A-Level in Chinese, ultimately leading me to spend a year at a university in north-eastern China between 2007 and 2008. Not being satisfied with just the one language, however, I then decided to undertake an undergraduate degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Leeds, a year of which was spent in Egypt in 2011, with a shorter stay in Kuwait. This interest in Arabic language, particularly the varieties of the Arabian Peninsula, encouraged me to engage with Liverpool-Yemenis as I began volunteering for an Arabic weekend school and the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival in 2013, as well as joining a community interpreting course which was primarily attended by Liverpool-Arabs. Comparing the local context of Liverpool to my experiences as a student in the environs of Leeds, I became aware that Liverpool was 'different'. Unlike other Northern English cities many of whose Muslim populations are predominantly of South-Asian heritage, Liverpool is distinguished by its strong, yet little discussed, Arab presence. Nonetheless, in my everyday interactions with (predominantly) second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis, I also recognised that these were more often than not underscored by a strong sense of 'Scouseness' and a shared attachment to Liverpool. These experiences alongside my own family history with its connections to Ireland and Catholicism also led me to begin to think seriously about the nature of migration and identity-formation in a port-city strongly shaped by diasporic experience. It is out of the confluence of these academic interests, an examination of the relevant literature (or lack thereof), and everyday experiences which the research questions arise.

Research Questions

The overarching research question which this thesis addresses is, then, essentially: 'How do Liverpool-Yemenis negotiate their complex, multiple positioned belongings?' The participants in this study, excluding a small group of 'community leaders', can be considered 'second-generation' or of the post-migration generation, and therefore the main conclusions concern how this group negotiate a number of salient diasporic tensions and multiplicity of positioned belongings (see Brocket, 2020, who fruitfully employs the term 'multiple positioned belongings'). Nonetheless, the 'story' of the earlier generations is also given space to demonstrate the changing dynamics of diasporic life and to better illustrate how the post-migration generation are forging their own identities in response to new contexts and concerns.

Of course, any single piece of research cannot hope to answer such a question in its entirety – if such a question can ever be 'entirely' answered, particularly so when the very concepts of diaspora, ethnicity, and identity are understood as continuous processes. Therefore, I emphasise that while this thesis presents a timely and original contribution to the field of diaspora studies, it is nonetheless a 'snapshot' of a particular moment in time, drawing upon a particular set of data. Although the overarching research question is intentionally broad, several main threads run throughout. One of these is the exploration of the dynamics of a diasporic tension expressed in terms of 'ethnicisation' (roots) and 'hybridisation' (routes) of identities. McLoughlin (2005a: 533) usefully summarises these processes as 'the reassertion of cultural distinctiveness' and 'the fusion and intermixture of cultures' respectively. Both processes occur at multiple scales: from the material reality of the body, to the family unit, the neighbourhood, the city, and beyond. Both are also implicated in discussions of situated (ethno-)national/local and ethno-religious identities.

This being the case, the ethnographic chapters of the thesis pay particular attention to scale and context in recognising that what is prioritised in one context, may remain in the background in another. Another main consideration is that discourses themselves are dialogic – the dominant and the demotic, the emic and the etic, while also recognising the importance of material, embodied practices. In this way, the thesis traces how both dominant and demotic discourses of 'culture' are employed situationally by participants through their own narrations and performances of culture, while placing the 'emic' articulations of participants in dialogue with the academic 'etic' discourses. Seen this way, the thesis does not presuppose that, for example, an emic 'reification' of culture/identity/community is incongruent with academic 'etic' discourses which reveal their constructed and contingent nature. The purpose is rather to uncover *which* discourses play a prominent role in which settings, *how* they are employed, and *why* this might be the case. The final main thread which runs throughout the thesis is that the study of the demotic, local, and everyday can be equally as rewarding as studies which take institutions and nation states as the primary frame of reference. As de Certeau writes:

> Many everyday practices (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) are tactical in character. And so are, more generally, many "ways of operating": victories of the "weak" over the "strong" (whether the strength be that of powerful people or the violence of things or of an imposed order, etc.), clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, "hunter's cunning," maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike. (1984: xix)

This study which examines constructions of everyday identities does not simply describe 'who people are', but recognises that the negotiations which occur in constructing and performing identities represent claims of belonging and public recognition – power relations are a key property of space, including in the everyday. In this sense, they also possess a political dimension being produced against various antagonisms. That said, the primary aim of this thesis is not to show just *how* politicised these identities are (and

indeed, emic accounts are often not discussed in politicised terms at all), but rather recognises that the political dimension of identity construction is itself an inherent ontological condition (Mandaville, 2001: 10, citing Mouffe, 1994: 108).

With the overarching research question in mind, the three ethnographic chapters each address a further and more narrowly focused sub-question which are structured around the three cornerstones of the multicultural triangle. These are:

1) 'How, when, and to what extent do Liverpool-Yemenis construct, maintain, and negotiate a Yemeni identity?' A further consideration within this question is whether and/or how constructions of Yemeni identities take part in processes of ethnicisation which seek to reassert boundaries or distinctiveness vis-à-vis others, and processes of hybridisation involved in producing hyphenated Scouse-Yemeni identities.

2) 'What is the story of Yemeni-led 'community building' in Liverpool, and how does this reflect imaginaries of an ethno-national Yemeni 'community'?' This question broadens its scale somewhat by delineating the history and changing dynamics of Yemeni-led 'community' building in Liverpool. This chapter turns towards the 'nation' of the multicultural triangle which is examined from two main angles: to assess how the national contexts, ideologies, and certain political agendas of the UK and Yemen have impacted the trajectory of Yemeni-led 'community' building, and to explore whether Liverpool-Yemenis organise or mobilise around an ethno-national 'community'.

3) 'What is the role of (travelling) Islam in the construction of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni identities and imagined 'communities'?' This question turns to the role of religion in both individual constructions/performances of identity and imaginaries of 'community'. It asks to what extent Islam and Muslim identities can be said to 'reinforce' ethno-national Yemeni identities, or, whether they are articulated in more 'de-culturated' terms. In contrast to an ethno-national 'community' of the previous question, it also assesses whether Islam provides the basis for an alternative 'community of co-responsibility'.

Overview of the Thesis

The thesis is split into two halves. The first three chapters discuss the conceptual, methodological, and contextual underpinnings which inform the three ethnographic chapters. Each of the ethnographic chapters also address a specific research question detailed above, but should nonetheless be understood as forming part of a whole – the many interlinkages and (dis)junctures between these chapters form part of the ethnographic 'text'.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the various conceptualisations of diaspora. As studies on diaspora have proliferated, so too has the conceptualisation of 'diaspora' itself expanded in scope. The key point which this discussion arrives at is that although diasporas may share many common characteristics, diaspora is best conceived as an ongoing process being continually (re)produced according to specific contexts, contingencies, and orientations. The concept of transnationalism is then contrasted with the more clearly translocal focus of this thesis. The second half of the chapter explores the three cornerstones of Gerd Baumann's (1999) multicultural triangle: ethnicity, nation, and religion, while noting certain adjustments to Baumann's framework. Notably, this thesis explores the additional dimension of translocality in the diaspora which Baumann's framework does not account for in any great detail, while also noting that from the participants' emic perspectives the 'local' (Liverpool or neighbourhoods thereof, and localities within Yemen) is often more salient than the 'national'. Nonetheless, the 'local' is often shaped by and configured in relation to broader national histories and discourses. As the multicultural triangle is essentially concerned with 'cultural' identities, 'culture' itself is understood in Zygmunt Bauman's (1973) terms of 'culture as praxis', drawing also

upon his notions of 'liquid modernity' (2012, original edn., 2000) as a pervasive feature of the modern, globalising world.

Chapter 2 introduces both the 'practical' methods used in the research, and how a methodology informed by the theoretical and conceptual approaches discussed in the previous chapter can be applied to ethnographic methods. It outlines why and how certain locations were chosen as field-sites, questions of access to these sites, the recruitment of participants, and limitations of the data. These are also considered alongside a reflexive discussion of the 'insider-outsider' debate and my own positionality as a researcher vis-à-vis participants. Ethical concerns relating primarily to informed consent and anonymisation are also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents a broad, but necessary, discussion in which the relevant contexts of Liverpool and Yemen are delineated, before examining the literature on Yemeni migration to Britain. It pays particular attention to the numerous histories of migration which have shaped Liverpool, and argues for an understanding of a multi-ethnic Scouse identity in which, drawing upon Brown's (2005) ethnography of 'Black Liverpool', Liverpool is reconfigured as a unifying 'signifier'. While a more narrowly local focus upon certain regions of emigration within Yemen as a parallel to the Liverpool context would have been preferable, a lack of literature on these regions means a broader focus has been taken which examines Yemen's salient geographical, sectarian, and political divides alongside the development of a social imaginary of a 'unified' Yemen – all of which will be seen to play an important role in the ethnographic chapters. The final section of the chapter presents an overview of the literature concerning Yemeni migration to Britain which is often described as having occurred in two waves, before considering a 'third wave' in

Liverpool. The available demographic data pertaining to Liverpool-Yemenis is also detailed to provide further context to the contemporary dimensions of Liverpool-Yemeni life.

Chapter 4 addresses the construction of Yemeni identities, and whether/how these are shaped by processes of ethnicisation and hybridisation. It begins with discussion of the strong translocal connections participants maintain between Liverpool and regions within Yemen, and the notion of 'translocal families'. A Liverpool-Yemeni wedding I attended is then discussed as a context in which the concept of the Yemeni *qabīla* (tribe) is employed in producing gendered (masculine) Yemeni identities – nonetheless, participants will also be seen to contest various dominant discourses of social hierarchy rooted in the Yemeni context. Moving from the scale of the family to the 'street' or 'neighbourhood', an ethnographic tour of Lodge Lane as Liverpool's 'Yemeni hub' is provided to contextualise the local and to further highlight several dynamics of Liverpool-Yemeni life. It then explores the role of language (Yemeni-Arabic and Scouse-accented English) in productions of ethnicised/hybridised identities before finally discussing how social imaginaries of Yemen have travelled and are remade in response to political conflict and Yemen's perceived position in the Arab world. The main argument running throughout this chapter is that (ethnicised) Yemeni identities in Liverpool are constructed and performed primarily in and via translocal family networks which maintain and re-create Yemen's 'presence' in Liverpool. As the second-generation increasingly make 'roots' in Liverpool through new 'routes', it also argues that these identities must be considered alongside processes of hybridisation and emerging 'Scouse-Yemeni' identities.

Chapter 5 broadens its scale in addressing two main concerns: to explore the histories and trajectories of Yemeni-led 'community' building in Liverpool with reference to the national contexts of the UK and Yemen, as well as the role of a set of community leaders whom I characterise as 'urban Yemenis'. The social capital and positionalities of this group differ significantly from other Liverpool-Yemenis, and thus they are placed in 'dialogue' with the more demotic articulations of the second-generation. The main contention of this chapter is that due to the shifting policies of the UK towards 'Community Cohesion' agendas, Yemen's complex and conflicted histories of nation-building and unification, the changing demographics of Liverpool, and the positionalities and concerns of the community leaders contrasting with those of the 'everyday' second-generation, participants are largely not invested in imagining or mobilising around a single ethno-national Yemeni 'community' – instead, second-generation participants are described as 'demotic cosmopolitans', invested in the spaces of the translocal family, as well as the multi-ethnic locality of L8 which is seen to be an important space of grassroots engagement.

Chapter 6 first explores how Yemeni Islam has 'travelled', contributing to the landscape of Islam in Liverpool, before exploring how participants articulate and perform their Muslim identities alongside considerations of ethnicity, hybridity, and imagined religious 'communities'. The presence of a Yemeni-Sufi Bā 'Alawī Order is also highlighted as an example of a 'confluence of narratives' – Yemen's presence in Liverpool, as seen through this Sufi Order, has now extended beyond ethnicity as translocal/national connections are also being created and maintained by non-Yemeni Muslims in the city. While the turn towards religion among British-Muslims has been noted (see e.g. Roy, 2004; Akhtar, 2005), leading to articulations of de-culturated Muslim identities among sections of

British-Muslim youth (see e.g. DeHanas, 2013a; 2013b), this chapter provides a counterpoint by delineating how, due to specific and contingent dynamics, ethnicity and locality remain salient in the construction of Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities, while at other times being articulated in imaginaries of multi-ethnic (but not necessarily de-culturated or de-territorialised) 'communities of co-responsibility'.

These chapters combine in shedding light on how Liverpool-Yemenis negotiate their multiple positioned belongings in a globalising age where 'time and space are compressed with such increasing intensity and extensity that the experience of simultaneity across distance is becoming possible' (McLoughlin, 2010: 224). By limiting the focus to the everyday in one locality, a rich ethnographic text of a little-studied but uniquely positioned group is made possible, while also opening up new avenues of investigation. Although any ethnographic study of diaspora is necessarily limited and partial, this thesis above all reveals how everyday Yemeni-Muslim-Scouse identities are constructed, performed, and asserted, and in which the local contexts of both 'here' and 'there' continue to play an important role, but also combine to produce new forms of belonging in the diaspora.

A main concern running throughout this thesis is, then, that all of ethnicity, locality, and religion *matter* in constructions and performances of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni identities – how, when, why and for whom they matter is a question of context and scale. The ethnographic chapters thus address these various dimensions of identity, highlighting the need for a context- and scale-sensitive approach which recognises multiple belongings.

Situating the Study

Studies on diaspora are by their nature often interdisciplinary, drawing from and combining a wide range of approaches. Indeed, the thesis draws upon ideas and concepts from sociology, anthropology, geography, history and area studies, to name a few. Nonetheless, it is perhaps the anthropological outlook which best characterises the thesis given anthropology's inherent concern with both location and the (inter)connections between cultures, identities, and social relations.

As there have been no ethnographic studies on Liverpool-Yemenis from an anthropological perspective, and very few published ethnographic studies based in Liverpool overall, I situate it alongside those studies which are similar in scope or which ask similar questions, albeit in a different context or location. Thus, the thesis most clearly stands alongside and in dialogue with two main bodies of literature. The first includes works on British-Muslim diasporas such as Werbner's (1990, 1996, 2002a) ethnographic studies of Manchester-Pakistanis, McLoughlin's (1996, 1998, 2002, 2009, 2015) various works on British South-Asian diasporas, and Kibria's (2008) and DeHanas' (2013a, 2013b) studies on new forms of identification among British Bengalis. The other includes the limited amount of scholarship on Liverpool's diaspora groups such as Brown's (2005) ethnography of Black Liverpool, Bunnell's (2016) study on Malay Liverpool, and studies which explore constructions and performances of Arab ethnicity, such as Aly's (2015) *Becoming Arab in London*.

In this way, the study equally contributes to the body of work on British-Arab/Muslim diasporas and to the literature on contemporary Liverpool by shedding light on a group which has received very little attention.

As much as increasingly security-conscious nation states attempt to erode 'hyphenated' identities (McLoughlin and Knott, 2010: 272), the everyday, local focus of this thesis emphasises how second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis challenge restrictive and essentialising notions of what being 'Yemeni', 'Scouse', and 'Muslim' means by actively asserting multiple, sometimes hyphenated, positionalities and identities. By drawing upon and engaging with a number of theoretical considerations discussed in the following chapter, i.e. locality-production (Appadurai, 1996), 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996), the everyday as a site of embodied agency (de Certeau, 1984), and organic hybridisation (Bakhtin, 1981), within Baumann's (1999) framework of the multicultural triangle and alongside the above mentioned empirically-driven work of scholars such as McLoughlin and Werbner, this thesis demonstrates that the study of everyday diasporic life can reveal a richly textured world which is not readily visible from an institutional gaze. Significantly, such an approach can disrupt notions of 'culture' and 'community' which rely on institutional accounts or begin with assumptions that the nation is the most relevant unit of reference, and instead reveal how individuals construct and perform their 'everyday' and multiple identities according to a complex set of experiences, concerns, discourses, practices and power relations.

Chapter 1: Conceptualising Diaspora and the Multicultural Triangle

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the key concepts which frame the thesis. Although each is given its own conceptual space here, it should be noted that the concepts of diaspora, ethnicity, nationhood, and religion are more often than not intertwined in a complex manner which does not always allow them to be neatly separated. The conceptual framing is in some ways a matter of clarifying a perspective in that certain concepts will take prominence over others according to the research questions and phenomena being examined. That said, it will be useful to summarise how I position the key concepts in relation to one another with the caveat that the reality of the social world cannot be contained in any single framework, and thus it functions here as a means to guide the thesis.

The first section of the chapter looks at the concept of 'diaspora' as viewed from two angles: 'ethnno-national' diasporas and 'religious' diasporas, highlighting how the term diaspora can be expanded from its earlier usage and fruitfully applied to explore new articulations of belonging in a globalising world, emphasising both the real and imagined aspects of such diasporic connections to people and places elsewhere. The second section looks at the three elements of Baumann's (1999) multicultural triangle (ethnicity, nation, religion), which play varying roles within the category of diaspora, and around which the three ethnographic chapters are structured. The metaphor of the multicultural triangle proved to be a useful tool in visualising three inter-related concepts which are all implicated in diaspora and diasporic identities both at a conceptual level and in the everyday lives of Liverpool-Yemenis. If diaspora can be summarily described as an

extension of ethno-national identities characterised by connections to people and places elsewhere and across national boundaries (albeit existing alongside notions of diaspora defined along religious lines discussed below), then the multicultural triangle of ethnicity-nation-religion represents the different scales and dimensions of cultural identities which variously inform the notion of a 'diasporic consciousness'.

Werbner (2002a; 2002b; 2010) often highlights that individuals can belong to multiple diasporas. Her (2010: 75) notion that 'Diasporas, it seems, are both ethnic-parochial *and* cosmopolitan' underlies much of this discussion. As the 'multicultural' triangle suggests, culture (in the broadest sense) lies at the heart of the discussion and as such it will be discussed in reference to Bauman's (1973) notion of culture-as-praxis, elaborated further on in this chapter.

1.2   Conceptualising Diaspora

This section begins with a discussion of how diaspora has been variously conceptualised and debated in the literature focusing on the ethno-national framework, and then discusses how an expanded understanding of the concept is useful for this thesis in considering new forms of belonging which may provide an alternative form of diasporic consciousness.

Disputes concerning the specific etymology and semantics of the word 'diaspora' in Classical Greek notwithstanding, in Western scholarly literature a diaspora has been described as typically arising due to a 'dispersal following a traumatic event in the homeland' (Cohen, 2008: 2), with the Jewish diaspora(s) being the prototypical example.[1]

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[1] Dufoix (2016) gives a detailed account of the early uses of this word as it occurs in Greek corpuses from Homer to fall of Constantinople, contradicting Cohen's (2008) assertion of the word having an earlier connotation of colonisation.

It was not, however, until the late 1980s that 'diaspora' as a term began to broaden in scope, leading to its proliferation in a variety of contexts – academic and non-academic. This proliferation was soon noted by prominent scholars in the field (Clifford, 1994; Tölölyan, 1996; Safran, 2004; Brubaker, 2005), generating discussion regarding how such a broadening of the term could impact upon its usefulness as a concept, with Brubaker (2005: 1) coining the phrase 'the "diaspora" diaspora' due to the 'dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space.' (ibid.) and Safran (2004: 9) writing that diaspora as a concept 'has become an academic growth industry'. This stretching of the term has been ascribed in part to social constructivist theories which led to the decoupling of diaspora from its earlier roots in the 'home/homeland and ethnic/religious community' (Cohen, 2008: 9; Brubaker, 2005: 2) and subsequent proliferation. The current use of the term now indicates that the contemporary discourse of diaspora readily includes groups of dispersed peoples, whether or not they conform to the more rigid definitions of diaspora centred around the homeland. (Brubaker, 2005; Tölölyan, 2007).

In response to the homeland-centred approaches, several scholars (Brah, 1996; Anthias, 1998) proposed that diaspora as a concept should be expanded and de-centred in order to better accommodate intersectional approaches which place emphasis on questions such as 'How and in what ways is a group inserted within the social relations of class, gender, racism, sexuality, or other axes of differentiation in the country to which it migrates?' (Brah, 1996: 179). Taking this further, Anthias (1998: 577) asserts that homeland-orientated conceptualisations of diaspora risk over-homogenising its members and do not pay attention to 'issues of gender, class and generation, and to other inter-group and intra-group divisions'. In response to the broad use of the term, Dufoix (2016: 393) in a thorough overview of the terrain argues that continued unreflective and unproblematised

use of 'diaspora' as a concept has led to considerable confusion and ambiguity.

Nonetheless and despite the apparent tensions, these various approaches to diaspora are

not necessarily mutually exclusive or dichotomising but rather present different lenses

through which to examine diaspora and indeed diaspora studies has been described as

having entered a 'consolidation phase' (Cohen, 2008; Brubaker, 2017). This is echoed by

Knott and McLoughlin (2010) who, instead of highlighting theoretical divisions across

disciplines which the increased interest in diaspora has brought, emphasise that it has

allowed for greater interdisciplinary approaches, bringing together multiple perspectives.

Despite the extension of the term 'diaspora' coming to include a wide range of social

groups, several scholars (Cohen, 2008; Brubaker, 2005; Tölölyan, 2007) have proposed a

loose set of characteristics shared by many diasporas to better clarify the scope of the term.

Brubaker (2017: 1557), reflecting on the criteria he listed a decade earlier, notes that his

proposed 'core elements' of a diaspora were not intended to legitimise or discredit the

various uses of the term, but rather to 'highlight what I would today call the central

constitutive tensions and ambivalences involved in efforts to define the field'. Although

attempts to 'identify' what constitute a diaspora may appear normative, the criteria

proposed by the above scholars is understood here as highlighting certain historical and

social processes which continue to characterise diasporas; not a rigid system of

inclusion/exclusion. Indeed Anthias (1998: 563) herself, despite arguing that Cohen's

typology of diasporas belies a certain element of primordiality, notes that 'The importance

of the typology must be that it acts as a heuristic device for the purpose of comparison'.

Cohen (2008: 16-17) lists what he has identified as common features of diasporas, with the

caveat that not every diaspora will share every feature and may exhibit them to varying

extents. These common features include dispersal, labour migration, collective memories

of the homeland, the formation of an idealised (real or imagined) homeland, return movements, shared consciousness among co-ethnics over time, the nature of the groups' relationship with the host society, a sense of responsibility among co-ethnics, and a distinctive creative life. He (ibid., 18) also provides a typology of diasporas according to 'Weberian ideal types': Victim, Labour, Imperial, Trade and De-territorialised diasporas. Alternatively, Brubaker (2005: 5) provides a more loosely defined criteria of 'core elements' which continue to characterise diaspora, noting that they can be interpreted in a broad manner: 1) dispersion, 2) homeland orientation, 3) boundary maintenance. Finally, Tölölyan (2007: 649) emphasises two points which signal that a group is in the process of becoming truly diasporic, rather than merely dispersed or settled away from the homeland as 'not all ethnic communities are diasporic'. The first point is that a diasporic group will maintain elements of the homeland's language and culture, and the second that there should be evidence of the group maintaining connections with co-ethnics elsewhere and commitment to the homeland which may take the form of remittances, travel, or political efforts in response to a situation in the homeland.

Of course, many of these criteria have been contested, but I would like to draw attention here to Tölölyan's (ibid.) notion of diaspora being a process, or 'becoming diasporic'. By viewing diaspora as a dynamic, dialectal process rather than a static unchanging entity, it is possible to move away from taking the concept as a fixed given, to a perspective which places emphasis on the processes by which a diasporic consciousness and identities arise – these processes themselves are contingent and contextual, again accentuating that the criteria listed above serve only as a general guideline, not an absolute framework. If we understand diasporas as continually negotiating and re-negotiating themselves vis-à-vis a multitude of political and social considerations in the host/homeland, an ethnographic approach allows a closer look into the historically and contextually contingent nature of

these dynamics as well as how they may become reified or systematised (Werbner, 2010: 74). Mavroudi (2007), looking at diaspora from within the discipline of geography, also reaches a similarly useful outlook in that by understanding diaspora as a flexible process it is possible to explore how essentialised notions of nation-state, ethnicity, and 'community' are utilised or mobilised within a diaspora (though nonetheless still contextually 'constructed'), while paying attention to the transnational and translocal linkages, aided and accelerated by modern travel and communication technologies. Although I did not begin the fieldwork period with a clearly fixed notion of what a diaspora should entail or how it should 'be', or even whether such a category was appropriate for Liverpool-Yemenis, it soon became clear that while essentialised notions of homeland, culture and religion were present and invoked for various reasons, these notions occurred simultaneously alongside internal heterogeneity and hybridity. Werbner (2002b: 123) aptly describes this particular characteristic of diasporas as '*chaorder*' – 'diasporic groups are characterised by multiple discourses, internal dissent, and competition for members between numerous sectarian, gendered or political groups, all identifying themselves with the same diaspora'.

As such, the thesis emphasises a conceptualisation of diaspora which does not overlook homeland attachment and the role of the nation-state or particular localities, as indeed Werbner (2011: 470) notes that diasporic groups are often 'deeply implicated both ideologically and materially in the nationalist projects of their homelands' while also noting that although diasporas are de-centred in terms of organisation, this does not necessarily mean all diasporas present a de-stabilising force with respect to hegemonic structures, nor should this be the sole point of focus. In other words, this study gives consideration to both 'roots in the past' and 'routes in the present' (Gilroy, 1993: 19; McLoughlin, 2013: 34).

1.3 Transnationalism and Translocality

Concomitant with the concept of diaspora is that of transnationalism. If we take Vertovec's (2009: 1) outline of transnationalism as entailing the 'economic, social and political linkages between people, places and institutions crossing nation-state borders and spanning the world', it is difficult to imagine a diaspora without at least some element of transnationalism. But how exactly do 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' stand in relation to one another? As the study of diaspora has produced a multitude of theories and definitions, so transnationalism has similarly produced a range of perspectives. Faist (2010: 33), while acknowledging that the various interpretations of the terms reflect different points of emphasis, notes that diasporic phenomena are 'a subset of transnational social formations that have broader scope', while Vertovec emphasises diaspora as the broader term, which may or may not include transnationalism:

> Diasporas arise from some form of migration, but not all migration involves diasporic consciousness; all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism. (2004: 282)

This development of a diasporic consciousness is in many ways a key feature distinguishing a diaspora from 'transmigrants' (Vertovec, 2000; McLoughlin, 2005a; Bruneau, 2010), and rests on a connection, real or imagined, that is maintained with the homeland and co-ethnics elsewhere and is continually being (re)produced. McLoughlin (2005a: 530) also highlights that the transnational aspect of diasporas has been greatly impacted by the use and availability of modern communications technology, so much so that the world may often be experienced as a 'global village'. I take a perspective similar to that of Vertovec (2004, 2007) and McLoughlin (2005a) which does not attempt to completely extricate 'transnationalism' from 'diaspora' (or vice-versa) or restrict its meaning to a limited set of phenomena. While transnationalism implies relations between

and across nations, 'translocality' more accurately captures the nature of the local-local

linkages which in many ways predominate in this study (see Mandaville, 2001; Kraidy,

2005; Oakes and Schein, 2006; Freitag and von Oppen, 2010; Brickell and Datta, 2011 for

further discussion of translocality), i.e. instead of the UK and Yemen, the specific local-to-

local sites of Liverpool and Malāḥ (or other Yemeni localities) are in many ways more

salient. Conceptualising these linkages and flows in terms of translocality also better

highlights how the global is reconfigured in terms of the local, or the processes of

'glocalisation' (Robertson, 1995; 2012). As McLoughlin (2014: 4) writes: 'Indeed, the

local and the global should not be viewed as dichotomous or binary opposites; their

relationship is dialectical, mutually constitutive and not necessarily mediated by the

nation-state'.

For anthropological studies which focus on the everyday of a particular site, a translocal

perspective is useful in that it 'conceptually addresses the attempts to cope with

transgression and with the need for localizing some kind of order' (Freitag and Von

Oppen, 2010: 8), where transgression here refers to those processes which transgress

national boundaries, or rather, translocality 'investigates the tensions between movement

and order' (ibid.). For Smith (2011: 181), translocality neither prioritises 'mobility' as its

defining aspect, nor 'post-national identities', but rather highlights 'translocality as a mode

of multiple emplacement or situatedness both here and there'. Brickell has also pointed out

that diasporic 'homelands' are not necessarily equivalent to 'nation':

> In contrast to this trend, I argue that peoples' sense of belonging in Cambodia is not necessarily
> best understood through a notion of 'homeland' which privileges ideas of national sovereignty
> in transnationalism studies, but rather one that includes local politics and points of familial
> affiliation evoked more appropriately through the term translocality. (2011: 27)

Thus while translocality as a distinct concept appears to have evolved out of transnational studies grounded in the everyday, and while many forms of translocality may also be implicated in transnationalism, the above discussion provides a conceptual underpinning to the thesis' focus on the situatedness and emplacedness of Liverpool-Yemenis both 'here' and 'there' as well as the resulting 'diaspora space' which they produce and inhabit. Such a perspective does not take for granted that the 'nation' is necessarily the best or only starting point for discussion, but nor does it completely eliminate considerations of the role of the nation in articulations of identity and imagined 'communities'. In this way, I distinguish transnational and translocal processes to emphasise different scales of circuits and flows of people, goods, ideas, etc. which are variously implicated in the formations of diaspora, both ethno-national and religious.

1.4 Religious Diasporas and the Discursive Tradition of Islam

While this thesis addresses the ethno-cultural/national dimensions of diaspora, it also questions the role of a religious diaspora, i.e. a Muslim diaspora centred around the global *umma* (McLoughlin, 2010). The role of new Islamic identities among British-South Asian Muslim communities has been the focus of several studies (see McLoughlin, 1996; Glynn, 2002; Eade & Garbin, 2006; Kibria, 2008; Bolognani and Mellor, 2012; DeHanas, 2013a, 2013b) some of which identify a Muslim identity as being more readily asserted by British South Asian youth who feel a diminishing connection to the birth places of their first-generation relatives. By juxtaposing a 'Yemeni diaspora' alongside notions of a 'Muslim diaspora', this thesis aims to further enrich the debate concerning how 'Muslim identities' are interacting with, or even superseding, diasporic identities 'rooted' in ethnicity and homeland and hybridised identities. Whether the concept of a 'Muslim diaspora' or

'Muslim-first' identities (DeHanas, 2013a) operate in any meaningful way within the construction of everyday Liverpool-Yemeni identities is addressed in Chapter 6.

The notion of 'religious diasporas' is one which continues to spark debate as McLoughlin (2005a: 540; see also 2010; 2013) notes that the concept has been 'one of the more obvious theoretical issues to occupy scholars in the last decade or so', particularly when discussing universalising religions such as Islam or Christianity which are not (or at least have not been for many centuries) closely connected to only one ethnic, national or linguistic group. Nonetheless, 'Muslim diaspora(s)' have gained a certain amount of traction in scholarly literature across disciplines and in an attempt to clarify its various conceptualisations Albrecht et al. (2016: 3) note that the term has more often than not been employed without sufficient conceptual or definitional clarity leading to it being used 'in reference to many different things and, at the same time, as ontic categories with little explanation or theoretical reflection'. The following discussion will attempt to delineate how, with an expanded understanding of 'diaspora', a 'Muslim diaspora' can be conceptualised.

As the notion of a 'Muslim diaspora' encompasses the many manifestations of Islam across a broad range of social, cultural, and ethnic groups which in their particular expressions may differ significantly from one another, it becomes important to clarify how Islam is understood as an object of anthropological study. Demant (2006: 43) notes from a historical perspective that 'As Islam spread it thus diversified, spawning multiple and rather different Islams', similarly Geaves (2010: 22) notes that despite many (if not the majority of) Muslims retaining the idea of Islam as a single tradition, diversity in interpretation and expression is widespread. Whether to speak of discrete, multiple 'Islams' or a single-yet-diverse 'Islam' is a question which itself has occupied a central

space in the anthropology of Islam. Geertz's (1968) seminal study *Islam Observed* emphasises the unity of Islam, while also highlighting the particularistic everyday lived forms of Islam. El-Zein, by contrast, reaches the conclusion that:

> the utility of the concept "Islam" as a predefined religion with its supreme "truth" is extremely limited in anthropological analysis. Even the dichotomy of folk Islam/elite Islam is infertile and fruitless. (1977: 252)

Asad's (1986a) response to the various formulations of Islam in anthropological studies is illuminating. In response to formulations which either essentialise Islam as containing some sort of unchanging 'core', or in the opposite direction, assert only 'Islams' in the plural, he seeks to affirm how Islam can be conceptualised as a single (yet continually developing) discursive terrain while also recognising internal heterogeneity:

> Islam as the object of anthropological understanding should be approached as a discursive tradition that connects variously with the formation of moral selves, the manipulation of populations (or resistance to it), and the production of appropriate knowledges. (1986a: 7).

By placing the discursive tradition as its 'uniting' centre, it is possible to emphasise how recourse to tradition remains a powerful 'binding relationship and orientation of the present (and future) to the past.' (McLoughlin, 2007: 286) This disjuncture between the socially-constructed, contingent nature of categories such as 'diaspora, religion, ethnicity', against their common (emic) perception as 'real' or 'stable' is one which appears continually throughout their respective discussions. Furthering the debate from Asad's conceptualisation of Islam as a discursive terrain but placing the focus more firmly on everyday, lived Islam, Schielke (2009, 2010, also Mahmood, 2005) provides an illuminating view which moves away the idea that piety and tradition take place outside of or in isolation from the 'messier but richer fields of everyday experience' (Schielke, 2010: 6). Nonetheless, authors such as Fadil and Fernando (2015) have criticised the study of

'everyday Islam' as prioritising 'moderate' Muslims and casting Salafi, revivalist, or pious Muslims as somehow outside the scope of the 'everyday', therefore becoming a normative discourse in itself. As this study is primarily concerned with how Muslim identities are constructed and acted upon relationally vis-à-vis other multiple belongings rather than individual religiosity or performances of piety, Schielke's (2010: 14) view that 'grand schemes' (such as Islam, capitalism, political ideologies, and so on) are enacted imperfectly in the everyday is valuable to this thesis which explores the multiple orientations according to which participants construct and perform their identities. In this way, 'being Muslim' in the everyday means recognising that while individual, embodied subjectivities are often multiple, ambiguous, and ambivalent, they are also constructed in reference to an external 'discursive tradition' in Asad's terms, or a 'grand scheme' in Schielke's which 'by virtue of their apparent perfection they can be called and acted upon, and yet the contradictions and setbacks of everyday experience seldom shake their credibility' (ibid.).

The following section now turns to the concept of the global *umma* which underpins discussions of 'Muslim diasporas'.

1.4.1 The Global Umma

The discussion of a Muslim diaspora here pays attention to three key elements: the ummatic discourse, Brah's notion of 'homing desire' (1996: 16), and the role of transnationalism (see McLoughlin, 2010, who brings these concepts together in conceptualising a 'Muslim diaspora'). All of these elements point to an understanding of a 'Muslim diaspora' as pivoting between territorial and de-territorial aspects, and it is the interplay of the supra-national, de-territorialised discourses of the *umma,* with more locally

embedded forms of translocality and articulations of ethno-religious identities which this thesis aims to draw out. It will be useful to begin by first outlining how the notion of the *umma* and its contemporary discourses are central to the idea of a Muslim diaspora.

The term *umma* appears throughout the Qur'an and the Hadith, but it is not until after the *hijrah* to Medina (known as Yathrib pre-*hijrah*) that it appears to refer more narrowly to the early Muslim community (Denny, 1975: 68). While the early significance of the term *ummah* has been debated, Mandaville (2001: 71) notes that: 'In modern discourse, umma often appears as a central normative concept which appeals for unity across the global Muslim community.' The popularisation of this discourse of *umma* as a supra-national community of believers stems in large part from pan-Islamist thinkers such as Rashīd Riḍā, 'Alī 'Abdul-Rāziq, Ḥasan al-Bannā and Abūl A'lā Mawdūdī, whose ideas were in many ways a response to European imperialism in the Middle East, and more broadly a reaction to universalising Western-dominated projects of modernity (Roy, 2004: 59; Mandaville, 2007: 49). That pan-Islamist thinkers were able to reconstitute the *umma* in such a way as a means to counteract Western hegemony highlights the 'travelling' nature of the term as Mandaville writes:

> there is still a sense in which all Muslims today are part of a diaspora whose 'home' is the umma of the Prophet's Medina. It is here that we find a potent reminder of the fact that theories travel not only across space but also across time. (2001: 109)

Similarly, Eickelman and Piscatori (1990: 3) in their edited book *Muslim Travellers* highlighted 'the specific importance of travel and its significance as a process of social action in understanding "Islam"' through chapters on the historical foundations of *hijrah* as a doctrine and its implications (Masud, 1990), and studies on later forms of Islamic pilgrimage (e.g. Mandel, 1990, from the same volume). It can thus be seen how the *umma* remains a powerful discursive, travelling concept with its roots in the early history of

Islam which is well suited to providing a new 'centre' of belonging in the face of a globalising world characterised by transnational flows made possible and accelerated by modern travel and communication technologies. While the *umma* as a discourse de-emphasises territory and prioritises Muslim unity over ethno-national distinctions, we will now turn to how this discourse opens up 'the possibility for a new, more mobile, 'homing desire'' (McLoughlin, 2010: 255, expanding upon Brah's, 1996: 179-80, notion of a 'homing desire').

In contrast to Dufoix (2016: 19) who argues that the 'centred' and 'de-centred' conceptualisations of diaspora are in contradiction, I argue that Brah's (1996) notion of a broader more ambivalent understanding of the 'centre' (or 'home') is valuable in that it acknowledges the ambivalences in diasporic attachments to 'homeland' as well as allowing the 'home' itself to take a more metaphorical, mythic, or imagined shape. This is particularly useful when considering religious diasporas as offering alternative forms of belonging. Despite the supra-national and de-territorial nature of the ummatic discourse, Mandaville (2001) and McLoughlin (2010) highlight that Islam as a 'travelling' religion is nonetheless well suited to creating 'a homeland consciousness analogous to that of a diaspora' (McLoughlin, 2010: 223), centred on Islam's holy cities of Mecca: 'the umma can be said to have a clear mytho-hisotircal and territorial orientation in terms of Mecca' (ibid.), and Medina: 'In these contexts the parameters of the umma are in flux: a community longing for the purity and stability of Medina's golden age, but one that also realises … contemporary circumstances are very different.' (Mandaville, 2001: 87).

With the understanding of a homing desire not representing a desire for an actual geographical homeland, the 'centres' (Mecca and Medina) of a Muslim diaspora are used in this way to highlight how the moral and historical 'travelling' framework of Islam can

provide a new form of identification which those born in the diaspora may find more relevant than a purely ethno-national diasporic identity. As such, 'This "home", however, is not a place in the spatial sense of the nation-state, but rather an imagined nexus of past and future, something that once was and which could be again' (Mandaville, 2001: 109-10). This de-centred conception of diaspora will be seen to also be useful when discussing alternative imaginaries of Yemen which are less clearly orientated towards the modern nation state. Furthermore, the question of whether Liverpool-Yemenis place importance on the *umma* as oriented towards mytho-historical centres of Mecca and Medina is particularly pertinent at the time of writing given the historical relations between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and Saudi Arabia's involvement in the ongoing conflict in Yemen.

Having considered the ummatic discourse in supra-national and somewhat utopian terms, and where its mytho-historically located centres may lie, it will now be useful to consider what role Muslim transnationalism plays in relation to the concept of a Muslim diaspora and ummatic discourse(s). As Grillo writes:

> the "imaginary ummah" is abstract and deterritorialised; it manifests itself in rhetoric and endless Internet debates. By contrast the communities formed by many Muslims in Europe are local and concrete. (2004: 858, citing Roy 1998: 31)

This necessarily presents us with a (dis)juncture in that although the *umma* envisions a supra-national unity, individuals act within/across nations and their surroundings (Grillo, 2004: 864-5). The complex relationship between the ethno-national diaspora and 'Muslim transnationalism' has been discussed by scholars such as Mandaville (2009), Grillo (2004) and Bowen (2004) who examine different dimensions of Muslim transnationalism from a variety of perspectives. Bowen (2004: 881) recognises that Muslim transnational movements and practices often explicitly or implicitly describe dimensions of a diasporic context framed in ethno-national terms as he writes 'these transnational religious

movements develop a diasporic character in the form of representations and imaginations of a homeland.' (cf. Riccio, 2001; Grillo, 2004; Werbner, 2003). In contrast to the plethora of studies which highlight Muslim 'diasporic' transnationalism, Bowen (ibid.) points to the existence of a de-territorial form of a Muslim transnational public sphere not dependent upon migration. This public sphere allows debates and discussions concerning contemporary issues faced by Muslims and Islam in the West, with reference to traditional religious forms of authority, particularly scholars from the Arab world, and as a space which again recalls the 'travelling' (through space and time) dimension of Islam:

> Muslim public intellectuals who are engaged in serious discussions about how to adapt and adopt Islam to Europe are unwilling to cut themselves off from the transnational space that has, since the beginning of Islamic history, been the appropriate sphere for reference and debate. (ibid., 886)

In some ways, this form of a transnational Muslim public sphere is indicative of post-Islamism which, in broad terms, 'represents an endeavour to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty' (Bayat, 2013: 8). While this form of de-territorial Muslim transnational space opens up new possibilities for the study of Muslim transnationalism, it is largely concerned with 'the transnational elite of Islamic scholars' (Grillo, 2004: 868) and so the important question for this thesis is if Liverpool-Yemenis find the modern conception of the *umma* a meaningful concept in their articulations of everyday Muslim identities, and whether the linkages of Muslim organisations/movements between Liverpool and Yemen could equally be framed in terms of (ethno-national) Yemeni translocality. This highlights Mandaville's (2009: 493) point that: 'For many Muslims in Europe, Islam is indeed an important reference point for self-identity, but one whose strength and meaning are contingent on circumstance rather than fixed.' DeHanas' (2013a) study on Muslim identity in the East End of London sheds light on this nature of de-culturated Islam arising out of a particular set of circumstances and contingencies, as he

concludes (ibid., 82): 'elastic orthodoxy…is a skill young British Bengalis have developed for perpetually recontextualising their revivalist Islam as new circumstances arise'.

Of course, the concept of such an idealised form of the *umma* or diaspora must be examined through local context, returning again to Schielke (2010) and Mahmood's (2005) emphasis on embodied performance and lived experience. This configuration of the global in local terms, or 'glocalisation' (Robertson, 1995; 2012), is important in underlining that although discourses on a global scale may be employed, they are inevitably played out on the local scale. Both notions of diaspora in this sense share an awareness of people/places elsewhere and it is the intersection between these two forms of identity and belonging which will reveal the specific situatedness of Liverpool-Yemenis and how notions of ethnicised/hybridised identity (Chapter 4), constructions of 'community' (Chapter 5), and religious identity (Chapter 6) come together in response to and emerge from the local and global contexts in which they find themselves.

1.5 Hybridity and Diasporic Public Spheres

The notion of a diasporic public sphere describes a diasporic arena with often highly localised dynamics which at the same time may invoke 'transnational political imaginaries' (Werbner, 2002a: 251-252). This again recalls the glocal, as the 'global-local problematic' hinges 'upon the view that contemporary conceptions of locality are largely produced in something like global terms', in which such conceptions have both heterogeneous and homogeneous tendencies (Robertson, 1995: 31). An important early consideration of the diasporic public sphere is dealt with by Appadurai (1996) who brings it to light by tracing its genealogy and emergence through the development of the new role of the collective imagination in a post-national era, aided by new forms of media and

communication. This collective imagination has 'broken out of the special expressive space of art, myth, and ritual and has now become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies.' (ibid., 5), allowing for new collectivities, solidarities and transnational communities. Diasporic public spheres in this way are for Appadurai a clear product of the diminishing role of the nation-state as they form 'crucibles of a postnational social order' (ibid., 22). In a similar vein alongside Appadurai (1996), influential scholars such as Bhabha (1994) and Brah (1996) emphasised the role of hybridity in the construction of diaspora and diasporic public spheres as being indicative of the post-national era. Although diasporas do in many ways occupy a 'third space' replete with interstitial identities, in many cases the nation state continues to make its appearance both in individual articulations of identity and within the diasporic public sphere (McLoughlin, 2014; Werbner, 2002a). In this sense, 'Transnational loyalties, like struggles for citizenship, are never finally settled. They are the stuff of debate in the diasporic public sphere.' (Werbner, 2010: 75).

If diaspora can be understood as a process in which the development of a diasporic consciousness (of people and places elsewhere) plays a large, if not the defining, role, the existence of a robust diasporic public sphere can in some ways be seen as indicative of a 'mature' diaspora such as the Manchester-Pakistani community which, having gained confidence through a sustained diasporic consciousness across generations, opens up an arena for debate and argument on 'shared foci of passionate debate rather than internal homogeneity and agreement' (ibid.).[2] Such an understanding of diasporic public spheres also helps accentuate the diasporic tension of existing 'here' and 'there', while also

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[2] See also Scharbrodt's (2020) study on the development of Twelver Shia transnational networks in London.

recognising that this tension itself allows diasporas to create and exist in their 'own' spaces – or, in Bhabha's (1994) terms, the 'third space'.

As a concept, hybridity theory finds its origins in the works of Hall (1990), Gilroy (1993), Bhabha (1994) who challenge, albeit from somewhat different angles, essentialised notions of ethnicity, race, nation, culture and 'community'. Its impact has been far reaching across the social sciences, anthropology, post-colonial studies and literary theory. Indeed, it would now seem difficult to talk about diaspora without also mentioning hybridity. In many ways it has become an all-encompassing ontology which views the world as inherently heterogeneous, multiple, and dynamic. While acknowledging the centrality of hybridity theory in allowing a move beyond essentialism, several scholars (Werbner, 2001; Hutnyk, 2010; Shih and Ikeda, 2016) have articulated a more critical approach which recognises that 'hybridity' itself risks becoming normative, such as when Friedman (1997: 81) notes 'hybrids and hybridisation theorists are products of a group that self-identifies and/or identifies the world in such terms, not as a result of ethnographic understanding, but as an act of self-definition'. When 'celebrating hybridity' itself becomes the aim, it can risk obscuring phenomena which could point at something quite different. As McLoughlin (2010: 225) writes 'For many migrants, then, it is in a selective return to aspects of cultural tradition that many have re-discovered the moral resources to restore certainties in the face of cultural translation and social exclusion.' As Hutnyk (2010) highlights, these 'traditions' and identities are themselves never 'pure' to begin with, thereby problematising the idea that 'hybridity' implies the mixing of two previously discrete, 'unmixed' elements. By examining the interplay of dominant and demotic discourses as per Baumann (1996; 1999), a more critical understanding can be achieved which accounts both for the attempts to reify and fix culture, as well as the organic hybridities (Bakhtin,

1981) and multiple identities (Yemeni, Arab, Muslim, Scouse, British) which emerge in diasporic contexts (Brah, 1996; Werbner, 2002a; 2017).

The notion of organic, as opposed to intentional, hybridised identities stems from Bakhtin's (1981) work which concentrates on the processes of hybridisation of language in the novel, but his ideas are also applicable to diasporic identities inasmuch as these are 'performed' via communicative acts. For Bakhtin, an organic hybrid is one which does not self-consciously make use of its hybrid elements, unlike intentional hybrids which expressly use their hybridity to form a 'collision between differing points of views on the world'. (Bakhtin, 1981: 360). Marotta (2007), similar to Werbner (1997), considers organic hybridities a largely conservative force in that they do not *consciously* challenge dominant discourses, but nonetheless 'do begin to render prior structures of authority ambivalent' (Werbner, 2001: 143). Given that the majority of participants in this study do not form a group of 'cultural elites' or jet-setting cosmopolitans, it is these organic and everyday hybrids which remain the primary focus. In brief, Mandaville's perspective is particularly instructive for this study:

> Travelling theory, hybridity and diaspora…all help us to account for the ways in which translocal identities '[defy] assimilation into conventional political discourses and practices...and challenge conventional modes of interpreting the world within specific territories.' (2001: 3, citing Eickelman, 1982: 1)

1.6 Culture as Praxis and the Everyday

Before discussing the cornerstones of the multicultural triangle, it will be useful to first begin by considering how 'culture' is understood in terms of human praxis, an idea popularised by Zygmunt Bauman in his seminal work *Culture as Praxis* (1973) in which he discusses at length the conceptualisation of culture in modernity. Placing culture as

existing between (and emerging out of) two poles: power/powerlessness,

autonomy/fragility, resourcefulness/lack of resources, as a means to create meaning and

order in an otherwise chaotic universe, he writes:

> Culture, as we see it universally, operates on the meeting ground of the human individual and the world he perceives as real. […] The concept of culture is subjectivity objectified; it is an effort to understand how an individual action can possess a supra-individual validity (1999: 94, revised edn.)

Thus, culture in this broadly philosophical sense is not the conglomeration of discrete,

particular, distinctive 'cultures' as a set of practices, beliefs, rituals, or forms of

knowledge, but the praxis *itself*; in other words, culture is not 'a reality preceding the

action' (ibid., 125). Such a conceptualisation of culture lends itself well to, and is in many

ways implied (whether stated explicitly or not) in, ethnography which by its nature

examines the minutiae of daily life and the performances of culture which, as Gerd

Baumann notes, 'can never stand still or repeat itself without changing' (Baumann, 1999:

26). While this scholarly conceptualisation of culture as ever-changing praxis is a valuable

analytic tool for ethnographic studies, everyday performances of culture invariably attempt

in many instances to reify cultural particulars or invoke essentialised visions of culture(s)

while simultaneously participating in hybridisation and change. These essentialised

notions of culture are 'the armory of all three parties that debate the multicultural riddle'

(Baumann, 1999: 25), i.e. ethnicity as understood/articulated in the primordial sense with

its emphasis on roots and ancestry, the nation-state as a stable entity with clear boundaries,

and religion as an absolute (moral) system of beliefs and practices. In this way, all three

elements of the multicultural triangle have 'culture' as their foundation, but their

distinction also lies in how 'they are about somewhat different things, "culturally"'.

(Jenkins, 2008: 172).

Thus a recurrent theme throughout this thesis is the interplay between the perceived nature of ethnic, national, and religious identities as stemming from stable, clearly bounded cultural 'entities' (which are themselves employed relationally and contextually) and the relational, contextual and hybridising processes which occur alongside these reified notions. Baumann (1996; 1997) usefully distinguishes these two discourses (the reified and the hybrid/organic) as 'dominant' and 'demotic', both of which are equally deserving of study if culture is to be understood broadly as human praxis.

In his ethnographic study of Southall, Baumann (1996) presents a nuanced account of how 'community' is constructed and demonstrates how both dominant and demotic discourses occur simultaneously in such constructions. The dominant discourse is summarily:

> the stylization of ethnic categories into communities defined by a reified culture, the dominant discourse can thus progress to a portrayal of minorities as forming ethnic-cum-cultural 'communities' (1996: 16)

Whereas the demotic discourse 'counteracts the dominant by drawing attention to the daily process of 'making culture', rather than 'having a culture' (ibid., 6). From this, it can be seen that by beginning with the notion of culture as praxis, it is possible to move away from viewing culture as defined solely by the dominant discourse to one in which culture encompasses the multiplicity of discourses and embodied practices which may be both hybridising and reifying. This being the case, this thesis similarly addresses how Liverpool-Yemenis negotiate, (re)create and participate in multiple discourses, challenging the notion that '"ethnic" minorities must form a "community" based on their reified "culture"' (Baumann, 1997: 214). This study, then, understands that while performances of culture and re-traditionalisation may call upon reifying or reified notions of culture, it is the context in which these occur, and for whom, which is of interest.

I would also like to highlight the 'everyday' here as a valuable means of challenging the primacy of top-down dominant, normative discourses which take 'ethnicity', 'cultural community', or 'religion' to be stable and fixed, by accentuating how these discourses exist alongside demotic discourses, painting a more complex and nuanced picture of how concepts such as 'ethnicity', 'nation' and 'religion' operate and are negotiated as seen through the lives of the participants in question who in many ways form 'organic hybrids' (Bakhtin, 1981). This concept of the everyday as resisting easy categorisation or theorisation into any one model again echoes Bauman's notions put forward in *Culture as Praxis* (1973), ideas which are expanded upon in *Liquid Modernity* (2000), which stresses how the preoccupation with categorisation (characteristic of modernist projects and positivism more generally) ignores the pervasive 'liquid' character of modernity. Individuals are now cast as 'consumers' rather than 'producers' continually challenged to reinvent themselves in an era where 'There is change, always change, ever new change, but no destination, no finishing point, and no anticipation of a mission accomplished' (Bauman, 2005: 66). For Bauman, in this way, the only certainty is the 'uncertainty' of liquid modernity. Diaspora in the time of liquid modernity, then, is perhaps a context in which this radical transience is keenly felt and observed. While Bauman's insights concern the general condition of modernity, the task here is to examine the everyday negotiations of identity and belonging which take place against this backdrop. While we may all now be consumers rather than producers, this is not to deny individuals any agency in their everyday lives. It is here that de Certeau's seminal work, the *Practice of the Everyday* (1984), provides a useful counterpoint in highlighting how individuals resist, (re)negotiate, and reinterpret the everyday according to their own understanding and needs, often in ways which contradict the notions of those in power or the dominant discourses. For de Certeau, however minor these transgressions may be, they nonetheless characterise how

the everyday is not just a mundane sphere where nothing extraordinary takes places and is consequently of little important, but rather:

> As unrecognized producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths in the jungle of functionalist rationality, consumers produce through their signifying practices…"indirect" or "errant" trajectories obeying their own logic. In the technocratically constructed, written, and functionalized space in which the consumers move about, their trajectories form unforeseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space…the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop. (1988: xviii)

Liquid modernity may be a given, but this does not deny that reactions to this may often involve attempts to 'solidify' identities and cultural attachment – indeed that such attempts to fix culture are often so strongly expressed only further accentuates the underlying condition of transience. Taking de Certeau's notion that investigations into the everyday can reveal important insights into how individuals negotiate this 'liquid modernity', various scholars have made fruitful use of an 'everyday perspective'. McGuire (2008: 6), looking at religion, has accentuated the value of qualitative examination of the everyday in that it foregrounds 'the complexities, apparent inconsistencies, heterogeneity, and untidiness of the range of religious practices that people in any given culture and period find meaningful and useful'. Taking a similar approach, the edited volume *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe* (Dessing, Jeldtoft, Nielsen and Woodhead, eds., 2013) does not take the more traditional approach of viewing Islam from an institutional perspective, but places the emphasis on how it operates in people's everyday lives, underlining the ambivalences and (dis)junctures between authority, orthodoxy, institutions, and lived experiences. For Dessing (2013: 39-40), the focus on the everyday offers 'a counterbalance against the tendency to privilege religion as principal identity marker of Muslims' thereby attempting to avoid reifying the 'otherness' of Islam. This study has taken an approach similar to

Dessing (ibid.) in that she prioritises three loci: 'religious organisations, public places such as workplaces and schools, and private homes' which largely correspond to the areas of life examined here. Of course, this approach poses its own methodological issues which will be dealt with in the following chapter. Similarly, Wise and Velayutham (2009: 3) demonstrate the benefit of an everyday perspective in illuminating 'how these wider structures and discourses filter through to the realm of everyday practice, exchange and meaning making, and vice versa'. Concomitant with the everyday expression of organic hybridities is the 'performance' of culture, in line with the notion of culture as praxis in that cultural identities are produced (and recognised by others) through embodied praxis of communicative acts which are themselves embedded in (often normative) discourses. If modernity is liquid, culture is praxis, and the everyday can reveal how actors navigate the many possibilities of identity and 'community' making, then it is the situated performance of 'culture' which our attention must turn towards. Performativity theory will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 where it more clearly comes into focus.

Returning again to Bauman, this is echoed when he writes:

> Motility, non-rootedness and global availability/accessibility of cultural patterns and products is now the 'primary reality' of culture, while distinct cultural identities can only emerge as outcomes of a long chain of 'secondary processes' of choice, selective retention and recombination (which, most importantly, do not grind to a halt once the identity in question does emerge). (1999, xiv)

Thus it is in the everyday performances of culture that a picture can be gained as to how certain cultural forms are selectively retained, reproduced, and gain a new significance in Liverpool, essentially answering the question of what it means to be Yemeni in Liverpool. Indeed, DeHanas (2013a: 82) employs a similar perspective highlighting both the 'plasticity' of liquid modernity and the interplay of dominant/demotic discourses when

describing the 'elastic orthodoxy' of Bengalis in the East End of London who 'accept the local social consensus on what it is to be a Muslim ('orthodoxy') and then work tactically within this framework, stretching it to apply to new contexts and situations ('elastic').'

1.7   The Multicultural Triangle

The above sections have introduced ethno-national and religious diasporas as the overarching concepts framing this thesis with particular emphasis on their intersection underlined by translocalism and glocalisation. This section now discusses three related concepts: the ethnic, national, and religious dimensions of identity, which are in many ways constitutive of a diaspora in that they are variously implicated in the formations of diasporic identities and diasporic awareness of people/places elsewhere. The relationship between and inter-relatedness of these has been characterised usefully by Baumann (1999) as 'the multicultural triangle'. Using the multicultural triangle as a point of reference, this thesis prioritises how its elements operate and come together in formations of Liverpool-Yemeni identities and imaginaries of 'community', while noting that they may in many ways be shaped by external forces. Of course, as will be clear throughout the ethnographic chapters, such a neat schematisation is rarely feasible (nor desirable), but this framework roughly illustrates how the concepts are conceived. The following section now discusses how ethnicity-nation-religion are understood and examined in the everyday Liverpool-Yemeni context.

1.7.1 Ethnicity

Much of the literature on theories of 'ethnicity' or 'race' begin with a discussion of primordialist or essentialist notions, why these earlier notions are now untenable, and how

constructivist approaches dominate sociological and anthropological models of ethnicity. Similar to diaspora, 'ethnicity' has spawned a vast amount of literature, with numerous differing theories and conceptualisations. Instead of detailing the well-worn genealogy of ethnicity as a concept by beginning with the 'routine beating of the dead primordial horse' (Wimmer, 2013: 2), it will be more expedient to begin by noting, in Brubaker's (2009: 28) words, that 'we are all constructivists now'. The primordialist notion of 'fixed' ethnicity (often 'fixed' via recourse to biology and kinship) has now largely been displaced by the more fluid and contextual constructivist understandings. Despite this general consensus as to the socially constructed and mutable nature of ethnicity, debates within a broadly constructivist framework are still ongoing.

It will be useful to begin with a working, if not broad, definition of ethnicity. Antweiler (2015: 27) in his overview *Ethnicity from an anthropological perspective* states 'The core of ethnicity is the consciousness and feeling of individuals that they are members of a 'We'-group, and their behavioral actions in light of this feeling.' As a working definition, this is necessarily only a starting point for discussion as it tells us very little about what characterises ethnicity as a meaningful group category (the 'We'-group) and how the group is constructed, maintains itself, and is negotiated in the social world, nor does it tell us how the term has historically and politically been employed. Nonetheless, establishing ethnicity in broad terms as a certain form of group membership with a shared 'cultural identity' will aid the following discussion.

 Constructivist notions of ethnicity owe much to the foundational works of Weber as Jenkins (2008) highlights the centrality of Weber's proposal that ethnic identifications arise due to subjective *belief* in a shared ancestry, which is often encouraged due to collective action directed towards shared goals. Nonetheless, it is perhaps the seminal

work of Barth (1969) which has most greatly influenced constructivist understandings of ethnicity as he locates it in the processes of boundary making rather than the 'cultural stuff that it encloses' (Barth, 1998: 15, reprint of original edn.). By focusing on the processes of constructing and maintaining boundaries, the concept of ethnicity gained greater analytic scope and flexibility which freed it from the preoccupation, or conflation, with 'cultural stuff' (Baumann, 1999: 59). Barth's ideas have since been further refined and re-examined, as scholars such as Cohen argue that the focus on boundary maintenance risks reifying the boundary; in response to this Cohen (1978: 387) stresses that ethnic boundaries are in fact 'multiple and include overlapping sets of ascriptive loyalties that make for multiple identities'. In this way, ethnicity and its boundaries are understood as always contextual, contingent, and relational and thus this study agrees with Carter and Fenton (2010: 4) that one should not begin with the assumption that any population 'has the characteristics of a relatively organized, cohesive group, with shared customs and values, and with a distinctive identity deployed both individually and collectively.'

The ongoing debates regarding how to best theorise ethnicity do not appear to have reached a single consensus as the following perspectives from influential scholars illustrate. Brubaker (2004) in *Ethnicity without Groups* argues that 'ethnicity' as a substantial entity does not exist, instead arguing that emphasis should be placed on the contextual and contingent processes involved in producing 'groupness'. Wimmer (2013) takes a sociological-Barthian approach stressing the importance of boundary making, and Jenkins (2008) calls for a more fluid understanding based on social-anthropological models which incorporate stability and change simultaneously.

Given the multiplicity of theorisations, the difference in perspectives seem to be in large part due to differing points of emphasis and the nature of the questions being asked. An

example in point here is when Baumann (1999: 145) questions why studies on topics such as 'the Turks in Berlin' proliferate and often begin with (false) assumptions on 'how this minority is bounded and which processes proceed inside and which outside that assumed community'. Indeed, by problematising ethnicity as a concept, this study asks these very questions to better highlight whether and how or when 'ethnic' identities matter to Liverpool-Yemenis, how these are 'made', and the contexts in which they are performed and employed. Werbner's understanding from an anthropological perspective is thus instructive as she emphasises that:

> By contrast, in my reading of ethnicity as an expression of *multiple* identities, such identities are positive, creative, dialogical and situational. Hence, for example, to draw once again on my research among Pakistanis in Manchester, British Pakistanis belong in a taken-for-granted way not to a single diaspora but to several *different* diasporas – Asian, Muslim, Pakistani nationalist, Punjabi – a *complex* diaspora, each identity pointing to different aesthetic and ethical expressions, imaginatively performed. (2017: 8)

A similar perspective is taken by Staub (1989: 42) in his study of Yemenis in New York where ethnicity is seen as emergent, drawing upon a 'variety of esoteric social identities and their associated cultural repertoires in response to exoteric cultural interaction'. In many ways, anthropological examinations of ethnicity place greater emphasis on its situational, contextual nature.

While culture as an encompassing concept has been described as human praxis in the broadest sense, the notion of the performance of culture is useful when talking specifically about performances of *cultural difference* which are implied in notions of ethnicity. In this way, I use the term 'Yemeniness' throughout the thesis to point towards the 'cultural stuff' of ethnicity: kinship, language, wedding rituals, clothing, home decoration, and attachment to various Yemeni political and religious discourses to highlight how aspects of these are variously invoked or rejected, changed or reified in exploring how the participants

themselves articulate what being Yemeni in Liverpool means. Of course, performances and expressions of 'Yemeniness' in Liverpool also imply their situatedness in the Liverpudlian or Scouse context and the co-ocurring processes of hybridisation. In other words, Yemeniness in the Liverpool context serves to highlight how 'roots' in the past influence and combine creatively with 'routes' in the present by examining how cultural narratives and performances are used and negotiated in the everyday – from the more domestic domains of kinship, the translocal family, weddings, and so on, explored in Chapter 4, to the more public-facing 'community' building strategies and city-wide artistic events explored in Chapter 5, and finally in Chapter 6 the relation between a Yemeni identity and Islam in Liverpool with reference to the particular historical context of Islam in Yemen and notions of a Muslim diasporic identity. Eriksen highlights the importance of understanding ethnicity in context when he writes:

> Ethnicity, as a source of cultural meaning and as a principle for social differentiation… can only be appreciated through a comparison of contexts, which takes account of differences in the meanings which are implied by those acts of communicating cultural distinctiveness which we call ethnicity. (1991: 130)

Thus 'Yemeniness' in the thesis is not a normative category pointing to a reified culture (although it may be expressed as such by participants), but rather it is used to highlight how Liverpool-Yemenis themselves 'make' Yemeni identities. In this way, I refer again to McLoughlin's (2005a: 533) notion of *ethnicised* identities in highlighting that while being 'Yemeni' refers to some sort of belonging in a 'We-group' with 'roots' in Yemen, the ethnographic chapters also explore whether it is employed in *ethnicised* terms – that is to say, whether ethnicised Yemeni identities form the basis of any mobilisation, imaginaries of 'community', or public engagement in highlighting their distinctiveness or 'boundaries' vis-à-vis others. Although individual Liverpool-Yemenis share the common factor of ancestry in Yemen, the question remains whether this fact itself makes Liverpool-Yemenis

a particular 'group'. As Brubaker (2002: 167) highlights 'it means taking as a basic analytical category not the "group" as an entity but *groupness* as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable'. I would also add to this that if 'being Yemeni' in Liverpool is not mobilised in productions of an ethnicised 'group' identity, it is equally as illuminating to examine the alternative contexts in which 'Yemeniness' retains salience – a question which a focus on the everyday is well suited to explore.

1.7.2 Nation and (Trans)Locality

In *The Multicultural Riddle*, Baumann's (1999) discussion of the nation is primarily concerned with demonstrating its constructed and imagined nature, drawing upon Anderson's (1983) *Imagined Communities*, but also stressing that despite nationalism's 'superethnic character', the modern nation-state still 'disadvantages other ethnic categories in the same state' (Baumann, 1999: 39). For Baumann, a radical re-thinking of the nation is necessary in order to reach a 'multicultural future' which hinges upon a non-essentialising understanding of culture. Similarly, this thesis also draws upon the notions of Anderson (1983) and Taylor (2004) in recognising the constructed nature of the nation (both the UK and Yemen) and its social imaginaries. Nonetheless, beginning with the 'nation' (rather than 'locality') as a starting point in a study which is primarily concerned with everyday subjectivities has been problematised. Therefore while Baumann's understanding provides a useful theoretical basis, the everyday focus of the thesis means first determining the contexts in which the 'nation' is relevant to the construction of Liverpool-Yemeni identities – it will be seen that, perhaps more often than not, (trans)locality takes precedence in the participants' accounts.

Rather than assuming Liverpool-Yemenis share an uncontested 'national identity' (British or Yemeni) as 'homeland' has been highlighted as not necessarily equating the 'nation', Chapter 4 demonstrates the importance of (trans)locality in everyday articulations of Liverpool-Yemeni identities. An approach which begins from a smaller unit of analysis (the family and street/neighbourhood in this case) allows a more nuanced approach in exploring the complicated position which both Liverpool and Yemen occupy with regards to the 'nation state'. Of course, a study which begins from the smaller scales of the family and the neighbourhood necessarily requires a move away from methodological nationalism. While the 'nation' in this study often remains on the periphery in demotic accounts which prioritise the (trans)local, the 'nation' is also never entirely absent as productions of 'locality' below the level of the nation are nonetheless implicated in national-local power relations. Thus in this thesis, Baumann's 'national' cornerstone of the multicultural triangle has been adapted to reflect the context- and scale-sensitive nature of the research questions as well as the important dimension of (trans)locality.

Additionally, it must also be underlined that although ethnicity and nationhood are often mutually implicated, nationhood cannot always be explained solely via ethnicity and not every ethnic group has produced its corresponding nation (Gellner, 1983; Calhoun, 2000) – Yemen's complex and contested histories of nation-building attest to this.[3] Jenkins (2008: 148) argues that the key difference separating 'ethnicity' from 'nationalism' is that of ideology – nationalism presupposes a national ideology as espoused in nationalist discourses, whereas ethnicity itself is not necessarily ideological. While Yemeni

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[3] Baumann's (1999: 31) notion of nation-states as 'post-ethnic' and 'superethnic' is also illuminating, as it underlines how nation-states have variously incorporated different ethnic groups into projects of nation-building which has often led to the structural exclusion or marginalisation of other ethnic groups, hence the 'multicultural riddle'. Yemen (or the Yemeni states prior to unification) is no exception in this regard, with Yemenite-Jewish communities being a prominent example, having been valorised and marginalised at different periods.

nationalist discourses will be seen to play a role in certain contexts, and while (Scouse)-

Yemeni identities will inevitably be shaped by other various ideologies, they are not

necessarily invoked in an ideological or politicised sense – although of course such

invocations can be read as containing a 'political' dimension. The stress here is that the

'local', 'national' and 'supranational' also exist in dialogue, sometimes clashing (even

violently so), sometimes coalescing. With such a view it is possible to examine the 'wide'

circuits of transnational Islam aided by modern communications technology, the impact of

Britain's colonisation of Aden, and the more 'narrow' circuits of translocal practices and

activities as seen in the flow of goods between the specific sites of Liverpool and Yemeni

regions, and the recurring journeys to particular places in Yemen. It is not enough to

assume that (regional) Yemeni identities are perfectly aligned with Yemen as a nation-

state, nor that Scouse identities are unproblematically subsumed under a 'British' identity.

The role of national discourses such as 'Community Cohension' (see O'Toole et al., 2016,

for discussion of the implications of Community Cohension and Prevent policies on state-

Muslim engagement, also Kassimeris and Jackson, 2012) alongside their local

implementation and negotiation are explored in Chapter 5 which looks more specifically at

how the national ideologies, agendas, and discourses of the UK and Yemen have impacted

Yemeni-led 'community' building in Liverpool and whether Liverpool-Yemenis mobilise

around an ethno-national Yemeni identity or imaginary of 'community'.

The everyday focus on the 'local' acknowledges the role of the 'nation', its ideologies, and

discourses, but nonetheless emphasises that this dialogic relationship itself produces

'local' modes of being and belonging. Appadurai's (1996: 186) conceptualisation of

locality it thus instructive as he traces how locality is both produced by certain contexts,

and is itself context-generative. The defining point of these contexts is that of social

power, control, and the relationships which exist in and between neighbourhoods and the state.

1.7.3 Religion

Just as the first section of this chapter explored the possibility of 'Muslim diasporas' by discussing the emergence and role of ummatic discourses with a possible mythologised homeland centred around Mecca and Medina in the making of Muslim diasporas, it will be useful to now examine the third part of the multicultural triangle: religion vis-à-vis ethnicity and nation. Scholars have variously proposed how religion should be theorised in relation to culture, with Geertz (1973: 123) placing the two in an open-ended relationship, writing: 'The importance of religion lies in its capacity to serve for the individual or for a group, as a source of general, yet distinctive, conceptions of the world, the self and the relations between them'. In many instances ethnicity and religion share a closer, mutually reinforcing connection, sometimes with religion representing the main form of ethnic distinctiveness, as Mitchell highlights:

> Religion is not just a *marker* of identity, but rather its symbols, rituals and organizations are used to boost ethnic identity. In this version of the relationship, the substantive content of religion plays a more significant role in the construction of group identity. (2006: 1140)

Similarly, many anthropological studies include religion within the 'cultural stuff' of an ethnic group, with religion sometimes being one of the more obvious sources of cultural differentiation, as Antweiler (2013: 27) notes that 'the main anchors and motivating forces for this [ethnic] identity seem to be those of a common language and/or religion'.

Despite religion playing a clear and significant role in many constructions and processes of ethnicity and diaspora, McLoughlin and Zavos (2014: 159) point out a lack of literature

which incorporates religion into theories of race/ethnicity or diaspora/hybridity.

Attempting to remedy this, Knott (2005a: 119) stresses that studies of religion in the

diaspora should view 'religion as a dynamic and engaged part of a complex social

environment or habitat, which is itself criss-crossed with wider communications and power

relations'. This is to say that religion in the diaspora should not be seen as a minor subset

of ethnicity (particularly when considering the role of global ummatic discourses and the

'travelling' nature of Islam) but that it exists in a complex relationship with its cognates.

Werbner highlights this when she notes that:

> Being "Pakistani", it becomes clear, far from referring to a fixed, reified identity, encompasses
> a historically produced multiplicity created in response to diasporic and subcontinental
> movements: of Islamicisation, Empire, modernism and nationalism, and further embedded in
> religious, regional and linguistic traditions. (2017: 8)

Accordingly, Chapter 6 of this thesis seeks to examine how Islam is invoked and

articulated in productions of Liverpool-Yemeni identities by examining the trajectory of

Islam in Liverpool through the existing Muslim institutions, observations at religious

events, and participants' experiences and narratives. This allows for a nuanced view of

how Islam may be simultaneously used to reinforce a sense of Yemeniness, and also being

articulated in broader (transnational, de-culturated) terms, while being cognisant that such

articulations are themselves situated in everyday, lived realities. The trajectory of Islam in

Britain, and Liverpool more specifically, will be discussed in Chapter 3 and further

explored in the ethnographic context in Chapter 6, but it will be useful to note here how

the discourses of (pan-)Islamism, pan-Arabism, and Islamic revivalism further complicate

the relationship between diaspora-ethnicity-religion-nation. Both pan-Islamism and pan-

Arabism have influenced the trajectory of Yemen and continue to be implicated in the

current conflict in Yemen which broke out in 2015. While I would like to stress that this

study is not an examination of pan/post-Islamism or Islamist groups *per se* in Liverpool,

the influence of both (pan)-Islamist and pan-Arabist movements require elaboration given their long-lasting impact as well as taking into account the possibility of 'post-Islamism'. As mentioned, the re-conceptualisation (or re-purposing) of the *umma* in modernity emphasising a global Muslim community can be attributed in large part to the early Islamist thinkers partly as a reaction to the establishment of nation states in the Arab world (Roy, 2004: 59; Mandaville, 2014: 74), but this is not to say that all Muslims who share a similar view of the *umma* are 'Islamists' or are affiliated with 'Islamism'. For Mandaville, Islamism refers more narrowly to:

> forms of political theory and practice that have as their goal the establishment of an Islamic political order in the sense of a state whose governmental principles, institutions, and legal systems derive directly from the *shari'ah* (2014: 72, cf. Bayat, 2013: 4-7 for a similar discussion)

This being the case, it is necessary to distinguish between Islamist groups with decidedly political aims such as Jama'ati Islami, and revivalist groups such as Tabligh-i Jama'at and the Deobandi tradition, which is particularly well-represented in Britain given its origins in South Asia (Siddiqui, 2004: 49). For Roy (2004), pan-Islamism with its focus on a global *umma* and the illegitimacy of the secular nation state as a political ideology is deemed to have largely failed, giving rise to new forms of revivalism and/or neo-fundamentalism indicative of post-Islamism, in which personal piety and de-cultured forms of Islam take precedence, especially in the West. In the supposed post-Islamist era, where Islamist movements do arise, they tend to be directed towards the national, not global, context therefore ultimately 'accepting' the nation state within various forms of 'Islamo-nationalism' now common across the Arab world, including Yemen but notably excluding Saudi Arabia (ibid., 65, cf. Chamkhi, 2014 for a discussion on post-Arab Spring 'neo-Islamism'). The role of neo-fundamentalism in post-Islamism hinges on the forces of globalisation and Westernisation as Roy (2004: 26) writes: 'globalisation can be

accommodated through a liberal reformist view of Islam, a charismatic and spiritual approach…or a neofundamentalist stress of *sharia* (laws) and *ibadat* (rituals)', noting that the neofundamentalist approach has been the more successful and visible of the two. Nonetheless, the events of the Arab Spring in 2011 have caused scholars to question the notion of post-Islamism given the victory of Islamist parties in Yemen and elsewhere (Naji, 2015: 253, Mandaville, 2014: 370). What this consideration of the intersection between Arab nationalist projects, pan/neo-Islamism, re-Islamisation and post-Islamism highlights is perhaps Bauman's (2000) notion of 'liquid modernity', in that the post-Islamist 'privatisation' of Islam and re-Islamisation of the private relate to the construction of identities which in the globalising/glocalising world 'appear to be caught between the universalising and particularistic aspects' (Mandaville, 2014: 408).

Thus the demographic make-up of Liverpool provides an interesting point of comparison with other UK cities in which the Muslim population are largely of South Asian heritage – i.e. do we see the same influence of the Deobandi or other traditions associated with South Asia in Liverpool? While it may be tempting to draw a neat dividing line between an ethno-national diaspora and a de-territorialised Muslim diaspora, the everyday lived reality and situatedness of these forms of identification are often 'messy', inextricably interwoven and draw variously upon dominant and demotic discourses along different scales and utilising different cultural 'languages'.

1.8 Summary of Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This chapter has introduced the key concepts and framing of the thesis in terms of diaspora as the overarching concept; and, its constituents: ethnicity-nation-religion which make up the 'multicultural triangle'. I have foregrounded the importance of the translocal alongside

the co-occurring processes of ethnicisation and hybridisation while maintaining awareness of scale/context when discussing the dominant/demotic and national/local. The notion of 'diaspora space' as a 'confluence of narratives' and journeys (Brah, 1996) has also been introduced as a useful conceptualisation providing a perspective which recognises the diasporic tension of 'roots' and 'routes', as well as the ambivalences of the 'homeland' understood purely in national terms.

A recurring theme throughout this chapter has been to highlight the need for a theoretical perspective which allows concepts such as 'diaspora' and 'ethnicity' to be used in a way which allows for the contingent and mutable nature of these phenomena. If there is one unifying point bringing the above concepts together, it is perhaps that they are understood as dynamic processes, but nevertheless historically and socially situated processes.

If a single label were used to describe the framework underpinning this thesis, 'broadly constructivist' would come close. The encounter between ethnography and theory is often a difficult a one when the subject matter is primarily that of such nebulous concepts as 'diaspora', 'identity', and their constituents. Fieldwork may reveal surprising or contradictory results which are not easily analysed in reference to a single theory but nonetheless require conceptualisation. Acknowledging that no ethnographic study can provide a complete account of any group or situation, the question 'what emerges from the empirical data, and how does the researcher wish to draw this out in the ethnographic narrative?' must be continually reflected upon. Such reflection has guided the use of theory and concepts in framing the thesis.

Chapter 2: Methods and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research design for the study and why a qualitative ethnographic approach was chosen as an appropriate method to examine the research questions. Alongside the research methods, it also considers more broadly anthropological methodology and the implications of the previously discussed theoretical underpinning of the thesis. It also explores the advantages and disadvantages of using such methods, paying attention to questions of access, participant observation and interviews, the limitations of the data, and ethical issues.

In summary, the ethnographic data was obtained from twenty-one semi-structured participant interviews, and regular participant observation at a number of key fieldwork sites from June 2017 to September 2018. These sites included Yemeni-founded 'community' organisations, several of which I had pre-existing connections to through volunteering, a number of religious spaces which I attended at regular intervals (weekly, fortnightly), and sporadic events such as a Liverpool-Yemeni wedding, events arranged by campaign groups, and artistic/cultural projects. An overview of the participants, participant information and informed consent forms, an example of interview questions, a research poster, and the University of Leeds' ethical review approval for this study can be found in Appendices 1-6.

2.2 Ethnography for Qualitative Research

Although ethnography is not an uncontested term, it will be useful to begin with

Hammersley and Atkinson's rough definition of ethnography as:

> the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for extended periods of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal or formal interviews, collections documents or artefacts (2007: 3)

While this definition of ethnography encompasses a range of methods, Bryman (2012:

431) emphasises that although participant observation in particular overlaps with

'ethnography', the two are distinct in that 'ethnography' can often also include the final

written product. I have preferred to use the term 'ethnography' to describe the range of

methods used in this study, and also to emphasise the overall anthropological approach and

final written product, highlighting ethnography's origination as a tool of the

anthropologist.

Such a definition of ethnography highlights its qualitative nature, as Atkinson (2017: 65)

further notes that: 'For the most part, qualitative research methods help to gain insight into

the processes involved in co-constructions of meaning, lived experiences, cultural rituals,

and oppressive practices'. As this study was from its inception concerned with the daily

lives and experiences of Liverpool-Yemenis, a qualitative ethnographic approach was

deemed to be suitable in that such a method allows for the collection of a rich body of data

from multiple sources and contexts to address the key research questions of the three

ethnographic chapters:

1) 'How, when, and to what extent do Liverpool-Yemenis construct, maintain, and negotiate a Yemeni identity?'

2) 'What is the story of Yemeni-led 'community building' in Liverpool, and how does this reflect imaginaries of an ethno-national Yemeni 'community'?'

3) 'What is the role of (travelling) Islam in the construction of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni identities and imagined 'communities'?'

Given that these questions are themselves qualitative in nature, i.e. they do not seek to quantify religiosity, attitudes, attendance at institutions, etc., it is clear that a qualitative study which elicits articulations of identity and experiences in the participants' own words and participant observations at key fieldsites would yield valuable results better suited to addressing the research questions. Of course, qualitative and quantitative studies are not necessarily mutually-incompatible and indeed scholars such as Morgan (2007) and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) have proposed integration of both methods ('mixed methods'), thereby avoiding the 'paradigm wars' which place quantitative and qualitative methods in opposition (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 14). Alasuutari (2010) notes that the qualitative turn in social science research since the 1990s has in some ways reversed, due to quantitative research becoming more prized by policy makers, as he writes:

> The increased demand for quantitative research is especially due to the fact that advanced market economies have witnessed a climate of increased accountability in public expenditure and a requirement that research should serve policy ends. (ibid., 2010: 139)

Despite this, I maintain that qualitative research is a valuable means of addressing certain types of questions whose value need not be reduced purely to their usefulness for policymaking.

As can be surmised from the previous chapter, this study takes a constructivist approach stressing the processual nature of the main concepts examined such that a purely quantitative approach would not be suited to examining the historically and socially contingent and situated nature of these phenomena. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 234) make a similar point when they note that qualitative researchers 'tend to emphasize the

contingent character of human social life' in contrast to quantitative approaches which often aim to identify key variables from which generalisations can be drawn. Therefore, this study is firmly qualitative in its approach with the few (secondary) quantitative data presented (e.g. population demographics) used primarily to contextualise the qualitative data.

Despite the popularity of qualitative research and the qualitative turn, anthropology and its ethnographic methods have been subject to challenges as Jordan and Yeomans (1995: 391) note that 'anthropology was implicated in a complex historical web of colonial-imperial relations that also influenced developments in ethnography.' These challenges to anthropological claims of knowledge arose partly from the long-lasting impact of Said's (1978) *Orientalism* which critiques the dominant knowledge claims made about the Other from a Western hegemonic perspective, even if the work itself does not explicitly deal with anthropology, culminating in the 'crisis of representation' which the seminal volume *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) explores from several angles (see also Denzin, 1997; Dirks, 2004; Lewis, 2007). As the previous chapter emphasised the contingent and malleable nature of 'culture as praxis', it follows that the 'doing' of ethnography and its 'written product' are themselves part of this praxis, embedded in a multitude of relations and processes in which both the researcher and the participants are situated. Asad (1986b: 163), focusing on the power relations between the researcher and the researched, observes that ethnography always becomes a textual construct or 'cultural translation', written in a language which hinges on the authority of the anthropologist/ethnographer provided by his/her 'conditions of power – professional, national, international'. If this is acknowledged, Clifford's (1986: 7) statement that 'Ethnographic truths are thus inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete' is important in redefining our understanding of what ethnography does.

In response to these challenges, the field has been described as having taken a reflexive turn (O'Reilly, 2009; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), attempting to overcome the notion of ethnography as occupying a privileged position in describing social or cultural 'truths' with little reference to the researcher's own involvement and position in the process. In practical terms, this means continuously thinking about and questioning 'the contexts and the acts of research and writing…thinking about what we write and how; and acknowledging we are part of the world we study' (O'Reilly, 2009: 189). While this chapter has a dedicated section discussing my relation to and position as researcher vis-à-vis the participants, self-reflexivity is not limited only to this chapter: rather, it is woven throughout the thesis. Furthermore, Berg and Lune (2014: 212) notes that researchers are often encouraged to take a 'value-neutral position' but nonetheless the topic and research questions are themselves influenced by the researcher's interests and motivations. Indeed, attempts at 'neutrality' are misleading in that they imply that the researcher exists wholly outside of the social world under investigation, therefore falling into an unreflexive stance which has been subject to strong critique by several scholars (Asad, 1979, 1986b; Bourdieu, 1977). While the reflexive turn has certainly led to more transparent ethnographies, scholars have observed that excessive self-reflexivity is not always desirable and can lead to 'navel-gazing' (O'Reilly, 2007: 188; Damsa and Ugelvik, 2017: 2). Thus, I have avoided the extremes of the post-modern aesthetic in which reflexivity 'has been taken to the textual extreme, in which the voice of the author is a dominant one' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 204).

In short, the choice of ethnography as a method referring both to the actual methods used during fieldwork, and its subsequent writing, fits well with the nature of the research questions which require rich and detailed insights into how these phenomena are expressed, experienced and understood by Liverpool-Yemenis.

Ellen notes that:

> Unfortunately, through a process of conceptual slippage, methodology has also become synonymous for many with specific 'methods' or 'techniques', and in the context of anthropology methodology is sometimes reduced to participant observation. (2010: 391)

Similarly, Brewer (2004: 313) also notes this conflation, in that a set of methods are routinely employed while also being 'closely associated with a particular philosophical framework that validates its practice'. Indeed, this chapter itself discusses both methods and methodology, but it is useful to consider methodology as referring more narrowly to how and why certain methods and theories are applied. A constructivist approach has been taken throughout, in the sense of an ontology which posits that:

> social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision. (Bryman, 2008: 33)

This ontological position is evident from the discussion of the key concepts in the previous chapter and guides how they are examined, agreeing with Holstein and Gubrium (2008: 375) in that 'If many constructionists retain an appreciation of naturalists' desire to describe "what's going on," they combine such interest with decided emphasis on how these *whats* are sustained as realities of everyday life.'

While a constructivist ontology may be considered broadly a form of 'theory' regarding social reality, there exist numerous approaches to how specific anthropological observations are explained and analysed, e.g. Lévi-Strauss' (1963) *Structural Anthropology*, or the interpretive or symbolic anthropology associated with Geertz (1973), among others. While these theoretical groundings have been influential, this thesis agrees with Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 159) regarding the role of such theories in that it is often beneficial to use 'an iterative process in which ideas are used to make sense of data,

and data are used to change our ideas.' That is to say, the thesis is concerned with the concepts arising from the research questions and their related conceptualisations which provide the basis for the ethnographic chapters. Through these chapters, the thesis sheds further light on how these concepts operate in a Liverpool-Yemeni diasporic context, thereby contributing new insights from a hitherto under-studied group which provide a counterpoint to existing studies on British-Muslim or British-Arab groups. The emphasis on the contextually sensitive, contingent and changeable nature of the phenomena in question means drawing from a range of theoretical and conceptual approaches appropriate to what is being discussed, which can all broadly be labelled as 'constructivist' albeit with differing emphases. Essentially the thesis agrees with Appadurai writing on the question and centrality of 'place' in anthropology that:

> The central fact here is that what anthropologists find, in this or that place, far from being independent data for the construction and verification of theory, is in fact a very complicated compound of local realities and the contingencies of metropolitan theory. (1986: 360)

Ethnography in a diasporic context is, then, perhaps an area where 'place' becomes most salient as its members continually negotiate forms of belonging, identities, and flows which are simultaneously (or competingly) local and global, or, glocalised.

Asad (1986b: 163) also raises an important critique regarding the tendency of ethnography to become a form of 'cultural translation' which allows the ethnographer to 'uncover the implicit meanings of subordinate societies', thereby becoming perceived as an authoritative account, regardless of whether these implicit meanings are acknowledged or shared by the group in question. With this in mind, the thesis is less concerned with uncovering or interpreting these 'implicit meanings' (although of course some level of interpretation is always present in an ethnography), but rather has three central goals which are progressively and iteratively built upon: a) on a descriptive level, to sketch a picture of

Liverpool-Yemeni life, b) to examine the multiple positioned belongings of Liverpool-Yemenis, and c) to examine how and when these positioned belongings are shaped by, and shape, the particular contingent and sited (trans)national/local contexts.

2.3 Ethnographic Methods

2.3.1 Choice of Location

From its inception, the research was concerned with the specific locality of Liverpool. As mentioned in the Introduction, the choice of Liverpool as a site for research arose out of my own personal experiences growing up in Liverpool, combined with my academic interests in Arabic language and the Arab world. Several other factors early in the research process further solidified the choice of Liverpool as a research location. Namely, the lack of literature on Liverpool-Yemenis and contemporary Liverpool more broadly, the unique dynamic of Yemenis being the largest Muslim group in Liverpool in comparison to other UK cities, and Liverpool's position itself on the 'margins' of Britishness. Brewer (2000: 19) writes that in an ethnography 'the focus is normally on a single setting or group and is small scale', while he does not further qualify this 'small scale', the scope of the study was restricted to Liverpool. Initially, I had considered widening the scope to include either (or both) Manchester and Sheffield for a comparative dimension. However, it became clear that a narrower focus on Liverpool only, taking into account travel, financial, and schedule constraints, would allow me to build a richer, more detailed picture regarding the questions I was asking. Similarly, as much as a multi-sited study in both Liverpool and regions of Yemen would undoubtedly have added an extra dimension, the current conflict in Yemen made this impossible without significant risk of harm.

Within Liverpool itself, the fieldwork largely took place in Toxteth (also often known as L8 due to Toxteth falling largely within the L8 postcode region) and adjoining regions due to these areas having the largest concentration of Yemenis, Yemeni-owned businesses, mosques, and 'community' organisations established or accessed by Yemenis. The fieldwork took place over the course of fifteen months, between June 2017 and September 2018. For the first half (June 2017 – January 2018), I was living in the north of Liverpool travelling regularly to and from Toxteth and surrounding areas for interviews and to attend various events and other settings. While this distance was not unreasonable (approximately thirty minutes by public transport), I decided to rent a flat in L8 for the second half of the fieldwork (January 2018 – September 2018) to be within walking distance of the relevant areas which allowed for greater immersion, and also allowed me to take part more spontaneously in various events and activities which transport options and timetables might have otherwise made difficult.

The locations in and events at which fieldwork predominantly took place included Lodge Lane with its many Yemeni-owned businesses and Middle Eastern cafés, restaurants, and shops; the main mosques in L8; a Yemeni-Sufi Bā 'Alawī Order weekly gathering; other predominantly non-Yemeni mosques; an Arabic Saturday school which I volunteered at throughout the fieldwork period; a weekly 'intergenerational activities' evening organised by Yemenis; various events organised by the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival at which I also volunteered; Arabic reading club sessions organised by a Liverpool-Yemeni; and a number of other sporadic or occasional events and settings such as a 'community' gardens project in L8, poetry evenings organised by a Liverpool-Yemeni, *ifṭār* dinners during Ramadan held at the mosques, a Liverpool-Yemeni wedding, and visits to participants homes.
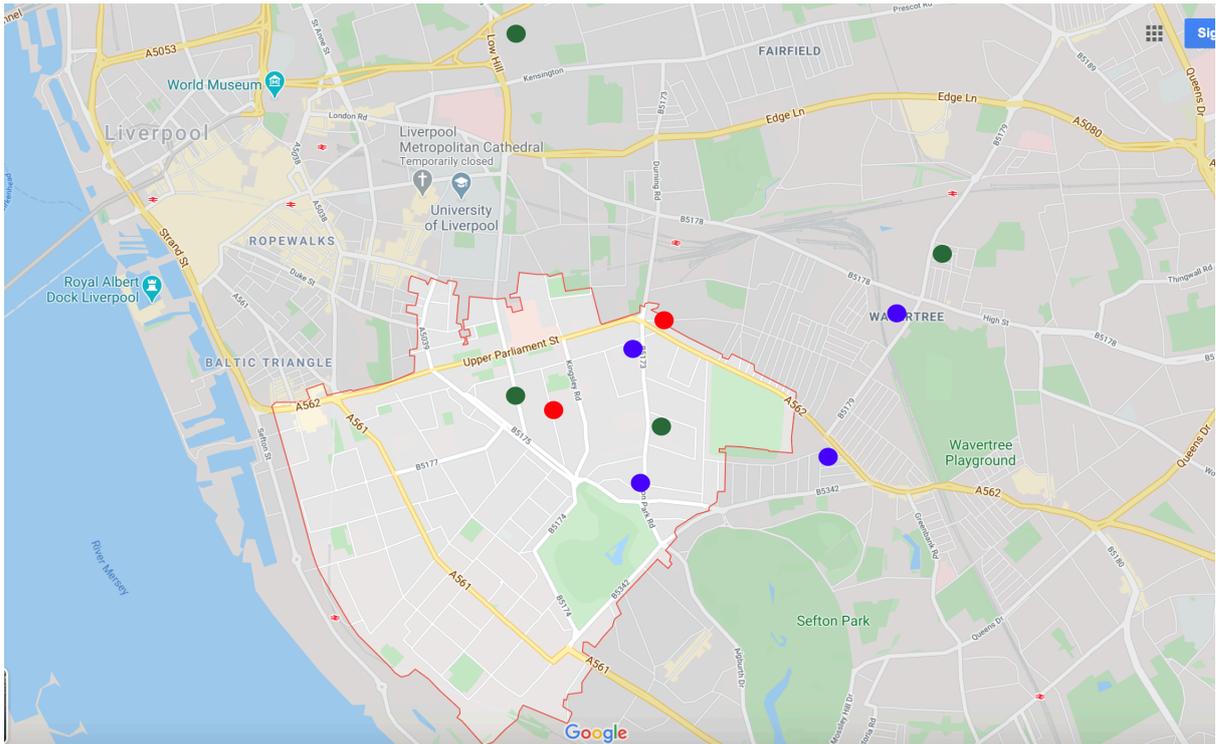
Figure 1: Map of L8 with key fieldwork sites. *Google Maps, 2020.*[4]

Figure 1 Legend

Bounded area:	L8
Red:	Arabic Schools
Green:	Mosques/Religious spaces
Blue:	Community centres

The selection of these particular sites reflects the research questions in that they provided

settings where it was possible to observe performances of culture, the role of 'community'

organisations, and to explore the Muslim landscape of Liverpool. This follows

Angrosino's (2007: 30) commonsensical advice to 'Select a site in which the scholarly

issue you are exploring is most likely to be seen in a reasonably clear fashion'. While it is

possible to identify certain sites as being more appropriate for exploring a particular

research question, and indeed the arrangement of the ethnographic chapters reflects this,

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[4] Google Maps, 2020. *L8, Liverpool*. Map Data: Google. [Online] Available from: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Liverpool+L8/. Reproduced in accordance with Google Terms of Service.

considerable overlap and 'fuzzy' boundaries must be emphasised here given how the underlying concepts of diaspora and the multicultural triangle often intersect and are mutually-constitutive.

The majority of these sites had been identified before the fieldwork began, either due to my knowledge of their existence from living and growing up in Liverpool or, in the case of an Arabic school and the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival, due to my previous involvement in a voluntary capacity. Some of the sites were identified through interviews or conversations at other events, e.g. an invitation to attend poetry nights, the Arabic reading club sessions, or the Bā 'Alawī gatherings. Furthermore, interviews with participants confirmed that my selection of fieldwork sites was largely aligned with those that Liverpool-Yemenis are familiar with and view as significant or forming part of the 'Yemeni landscape' in Liverpool. In summary, throughout the fieldwork period I attempted to participate in or be present at as many sites as possible in order to gather a rich body of data relevant to the research questions. The fortunate circumstances of the fieldwork period meant that there were few major obstacles in gaining access to the majority of the sites, but nonetheless the question of access remains an important one for all ethnographic fieldwork which the following section will now discuss.

2.3.2 Access

Before beginning discussion on the importance of gaining access, how this was negotiated, and related issues, it should be noted that this ethnography was entirely overt in nature. That is to say, I informed all gatekeepers, people with whom I was interacting regularly at these sites, and participants in interviews of my role as a researcher and what the research entailed before gaining their informed consent regarding my participation/attendance at

these sites or for interviews (see Appendices 1, 2, and 5). Covert research has been scrutinised due to the ethical implications it carries, particularly given the reflexive turn, as Calvey (2019: 248) writes 'For some covert research is transgressive and violates, offends and trespasses against any democratization between the researcher and the researched.'. However, arguments have been made regarding the benefit of covert research in certain situations where access would be blocked (cf. Calvey's, 2019, covert study on bouncers in the night-time economy of Manchester; Homan, 1980, on the ethics of covert ethnography; also Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I felt that informing gatekeepers of my role as a researcher would not create significant obstacles to gaining access particularly as several of them were already familiar to me and knew of the study. Moreover, a covert approach would not provide any significant benefits while also posing difficult ethical and personal considerations, thus an overt approach was taken from the beginning. Of course, identifying one's role as such comes with its own challenges, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 63) note 'people in the field will seek to place or locate the ethnographer within the social landscape defined by their experience' which can affect field relations.

Negotiating access was an important part of the early research process. Prior to the study, I had volunteered for several years at the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival as a general assistant, and I had also taught and assisted at an Arabic supplementary school in a voluntary capacity. Being familiar with the gatekeepers of these sites and having discussed my possible participation in the capacity of a researcher/volunteer meant that I was able to begin fieldwork shortly after gaining approval from the university's ethical committee (see Appendix 6) without spending a considerable amount of time searching for suitable sites and negotiating access. For both of these sites, I acted as a 'researcher as participant' in that I had an active role within the organisations as a volunteer alongside research. For the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival, this meant continuing with the usual tasks of a volunteer –

greeting attendees, providing directions, leafleting, assisting the performers and artists, etc. For the Arabic school, I volunteered as an assistant Arabic teacher which entailed first discussing my role with a leader of the centre and gaining a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check due to its attendees being primarily children or minors. My role at other sites was less active in that I attended as a visitor or guest after invitations from other participants (e.g. mosques and religious events) or the setting was less formal without an obvious gatekeeper, and/or I was invited by participants (e.g. cafés, Arabic reading club).

Gaining access to these sites allowed the undertaking of a method central to ethnographic research: participant observation, which DeWalt and DeWalt define as:

> a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture. (2011: 1)

It combines with other ethnographic methods, such as interviewing, providing context out of which interview questions can be further refined, or important sites identified. While participant observation has a long history as an anthropological method (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011), Bourdieu is critical of the emphasis it often receives, noting 'the inherent difficulty of such a posture' (2003: 281) and how he perceives the postmodern approach to reflexivity as inadequate. Instead, he proposes an alternative in which the 'conditions of possibility' (i.e. the social world which has generated the anthropologist, the particular anthropological tradition in which he/she is working, and his/her position within that tradition) should also be taken as points of consideration for a more truly reflexive ethnography. It would seem that the British anthropological studies drawn upon in this thesis such as those by Baumann (1996), Werbner (2002a), and e.g. McLoughlin's (2000) reflexive account of fieldwork in researching Muslim minorities do indeed make their personal and institutional 'conditions of possibility' explicit. Similarly, and as I have

acknowledged throughout this chapter, my own experiences and academic interests along with the works which I draw upon have all undoubtedly shaped this thesis.

Although access to the majority of the sites identified prior to or throughout the fieldwork was largely gained without problem, there were several considerations which should be mentioned. Firstly, it was assumed as given that some sites would be inaccessible due to cultural considerations of gender, i.e. as a male I would not be able to access female-only spaces (such as those in mosques or certain gatherings) nor would it be appropriate to attempt to gain access to these. This must be emphasised as a limitation of the study and as an area which would benefit from further research, not only regarding female-only spaces, but also because as Dewalt and Dewalt (2011: 100) note 'Differential access to the lives of women has resulted in generations of predominantly male-biased ethnography, which has often paid little heed to the lives and concerns of women'. Secondly, after interviewing participants who work (or have worked) at another Arabic school, it became evident that I would not be able to attend in any sustained manner. This was likely due to my outsider (non-Arab, non-Muslim) status , although it was not explicitly stated as such. In this way, the partial and necessarily limited nature of ethnography must be emphasised. Additionally, several of the sites were only open sporadically (e.g. several 'community' associations discussed further in Chapter 5) and without previous invitations or information regarding the occasional events, it was impossible to attend. A further example of the 'messiness' of doing ethnography also concerned arranging interviews with imams or prominent figures associated with religious spaces. In several instances, I had arranged an interview but this was repeatedly postponed until it became clear that it would not be possible (See section 2.5 for further discussion of researcher positionality). Despite these minor challenges and acknowledging the limitations of the study, participant

observation was fruitful, especially when viewed in conjunction with the data collected from interviews.

2.3.3 Interviews and Participants

In conjunction with participant observation, semi-structured interviews were also used to collect data. These two methods were complementary in that insights gained from the one would often inform and corroborate the other. The role of interviews in ethnographic research and how participants' responses are understood and integrated into analysis have been examined through various lenses in keeping with the theoretical shifts which have influenced the direction of, or arisen from, the discipline (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Svend, 2013). How interviews are understood and analysed in conjunction with the other data is discussed in section 2.6 of this chapter. Interviews in the context of this thesis served several functions: to allow the participants' own voices and articulations to be given space and to further illustrate ethnographic descriptions, to gain further clarification or insight into phenomena that had been observed, and to collect data which is not readily observable (e.g. stories of migration, past experiences and personal attitudes regarding 'unobservable' phenomena such articulations of identification with labels such as Arab/Yemeni/Scouse/Muslim). In addition, interviews themselves 'may be able to tell us about the people who produced them and the intellectual and discursive resources on which they draw' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 98).

Svend (2013: 18) notes that 'It is quite common to make a distinction between structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews' while also noting that the distinction between these should be seen as a continuum, ranging from standardised survey-style questions to more open-ended questions. I chose to use semi-structured interviews as the

research questions fall broadly into several themes or thematic categories (e.g. ethnicity, hybridity, 'community', religion) along which lines the questions were formulated, while also being flexible in recognising that participants may wish to speak more about one topic over another (see Appendix 4 for example of interview questions). This accords with Svend's view that:

> Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee (2013: 21)

The criteria for selecting participants was designed to not be overly restrictive. The main consideration was that the majority of participants should be either born in Yemen and currently residing in Liverpool, or, be born in and/or have resided in Liverpool for a length of time and identify as being Yemeni. In doing so, I hoped to interview Liverpool-Yemenis from across a broad range of age groups with a roughly equal number of male and female participants which would allow for a more holistic examination of the concepts in question, rather than only examining a subsection of Liverpool-Yemenis. Ultimately, I interviewed twenty-one participants, with females being slightly more represented in the sample (thirteen females and eight males, see Appendix 1 for a full overview of participants).

This approach was partially pragmatic in that gaining access to participants, arranging and completing interviews is often a time-consuming process which is not always guaranteed success. By limiting the pool of participants from the outset to a particular demographic group within the already relatively limited Liverpool-Yemeni category, there would have been the risk of too few participants. A further consideration regarding the selection of a broad range of participants is that a small, homogeneous group of participants would considerably narrow the scope of the research questions. As the thesis aims to explore

diasporic processes and identities from multiple positioned belongings, a heterogeneous group of participants (albeit within a 'Liverpool-Yemeni' dimension), is better suited for this purpose. In addition, the research questions, and thus the types of interview questions, explore concepts which are applicable across the demographic range within the Liverpool-Yemeni category. This is not to say that these concepts do not intersect with age, gender, class, etc. but rather the thesis explores the multiple ways and contexts in which they operate as seen through the participant observations and interviews. Of course, the attempt to 'interview as many people as possible' within the limited timeframe naturally led to its own biases and gaps in the final list of participants. The implications of these gaps for the study will be discussed in section 2.3.5.

2.3.4 Sampling Methods

The selection criteria described in the above section was used to determine a sample which was hoped to be representative of Liverpool-Yemenis in a broad sense. O'Reilly notes (2009: 194) that 'ethnographers rarely appear to worry about sampling for representativeness in this way and talk little in their ethnographies of their sampling procedures'. A key concern here is that of the ability to generalise based on any given sample. However, while selecting a sample which fits with the research questions is desirable, a constructivist position (as is taken in this thesis) has an uneasy relationship with the attempt to make broad transferrable generalisations. Indeed, the anthropological and ethnographic literature which this thesis draws upon has a firm focus on the contextual, contingent and situated dynamics of a given field. This is similar to what Denzin (2001: 41, 2nd ed) notes regarding qualitative research as 'intepretivism' in that 'They (interpretivists) reject the nomothetic, etic impulse to abstract and generalize' but instead 'offer explanations of how certain conditions came into existence and why they

persist.' (ibid., 43). Taking a similar position, the thesis stresses that any 'explanations' must be placed within their contextual environment.

While sampling methods in ethnography may often not be as rigorous or precisely focused as they are in more quantitative based studies, it is useful nonetheless to consider how the sample was arrived at while also bearing in mind that in ethnographies, 'sampling is addressed in an ongoing process as ideas are developed and analyses shaped' (O'Reilly, 2009: 196). Similarly, in qualitative research it is often unfeasible to rely on an inflexible pre-determined sample, as Gobo (2007: 406) notes that 'the sampling plan needs to exist in dialogue with field incidents, contingencies and discoveries.' This approach which recognises the ongoing nature of sampling in qualitative research was particularly useful as it allowed me to adjust priorities according to observations in the field, previous interviews and the overall balance of the sample as it progressed. The main method of gaining and broadening the pool of participants was via snowball sampling (Bryman, 2008: 202-203; O'Reilly, 2009: 198) in which further participants are identified from an initial group with whom the researcher may also be familiar or have access to. In addition, I employed what may be considered a form of 'convenience sampling' in that I would seek participants for interviews during participant observations due to these being locations where many Liverpool-Yemenis were often present.[5]

2.3.5 Limitations of the Data

The overall spread of the interview participants allowed a multiplicity of perspectives regarding the topics addressed by the research questions and allowed for a rich body of

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[5] 'A convenience sample is one that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility' (Bryman: 2008: 201)

ethnographic data from which several key themes emerged. Nonetheless, there were several biases which should be noted in addition to the previously mentioned gaps regarding women's spaces. Notably, young men (between 20-30 years of age) are absent in the sample of interview participants. The reasons for this are multiple – the fieldwork sites were predominantly attended by those over thirty years of age, participants tended to suggest people of a similar age with whom I could arrange interviews, and the general lack of (public) spaces in which young Liverpool-Yemeni men are well represented. Additionally, only two Liverpool-Yemeni women under the age of thirty are present in the sample.

More generally, the thesis has been framed as a study of *second-generation* (or post-migration) Liverpool-Yemenis whose parents were born in Yemen. For those under the age of thirty, a large portion are expected to be third- or later- generations as the next chapter will detail that the arrival of first-generation Yemenis to Liverpool grew predominantly during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s (Halliday, 2010: 55). Indeed, one of the 'under thirty' participants expressed confusion regarding which generation she considers herself.

In terms of class background, all Yemeni participants, excluding a small group of 'community leaders' discussed in Chapter 5, share similar backgrounds, with their fathers having largely worked in the steel works or other industry in cities such as Sheffield, Birmingham, and Warrington, before moving to Liverpool in the 1980s or 1990s when they set up newsagents. While individual employment and educational background is varied across the sample, all (excluding the abovementioned 'community leaders') grew up in strongly working-class neighbourhoods of Liverpool which have high levels of deprivation and unemployment. Thus, the thesis is by no means limited to a group of

educated, professional 'élites' – indeed the strongly Scouse inflection of many of the participants' narratives of growing up in working-class Liverpool will be familiar to the city's inhabitants. By more narrowly focusing on the second-generation, most of whom are now above the age of thirty, this thesis allows a fruitful examination of the diasporic tension of 'roots' and 'routes' as this group perhaps most clearly exemplifies the 'dual orientation' of diaspora (Werbner, 2010: 74).

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Many ethical issues arise in and from anthropological research due to human participants and activity being the primary source. Ethical considerations range from questions on the level and type of involvement the researcher should have during fieldwork, to questions of anonymisation and consent. As has been stated, a principal ethical consideration is that of overt versus covert research, with this study taking an overt approach as detailed. Another is that of harm, i.e. would the research (the process or publication of) pose risk of harm to the participants (or the researcher)? Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 214) note regarding potential harmful consequences of publication that 'these can come about in a variety of ways and may affect both the public reputations of individuals and their material circumstances'. The implications of this and how gaining informed consent and (pseudo)anonymisation can partially mitigate such consequences will now be discussed. Many of the issues also require reflexivity regarding the field relations and positionality of the researcher. Of course, not all social research poses an equal level of risk or harm; an ethnography in present-day Yemen given the conflict and surrounding circumstances would be fraught with ethical issues and a high level of risk for serious harm to participants and the researcher. While the research questions and concepts addressed in this thesis could be considered sensitive (e.g. attitudes towards/perceptions of ethnicity,

religion, politics), the fieldwork period in itself did not pose any risk of harm in that the majority of the sites were 'everyday' places visited by a large number of people regularly, and additionally my presence in these places would not put others at risk.

Before beginning fieldwork, it was necessary to gain ethical approval from the University of Leeds ethical committee (see Appendix 6). This process of gaining ethical approval was relatively involved requiring a significant amount of time to prepare and was in itself valuable in prompting me to consider the ethical issues of, or arising from, the research. The most important of these was ensuring participants were aware of the research and its aims before giving informed consent. Indeed, informed consent is in many ways an ethical issue central to social research as Hammersley and Atkinson note:

> It is often argued that people must consent to being researched in an unconstrained way, making their decision on the basis of comprehensive and accurate information about it; and that they should be free to withdraw at any time. (2007: 210)

For interview participants, this was relatively straightforward. After making initial contact regarding the possibility of an interview, I provided potential participants with an information sheet (either via email or in person) giving a brief summary of the research, the types of questions I was likely to ask, and that they were free to withdraw at any time or to choose not to respond to questions during the interview.[6]

Gaining informed consent for participant observation required a somewhat different process of negotiation, as many of the sites were attended by large numbers of individuals over the course of the fieldwork period, nor was there always a single, clearly identifiable 'gatekeeper' making it impossible to inform every individual present of the nature of my

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[6] The information sheet (see Appendix 2) also highlighted that they could withdraw their data from the study as long as this occurred within three months of the interview, as it would then be anonymised, and therefore unable to be withdrawn due to removal of names and other identifying data from transcripts.

attendance. My approach to maintaining transparency regarding the research, while also being aware that it would be impossible to inform every individual present at public spaces attended by large numbers of individuals, was to first seek consent from those likely to be gatekeepers, many of whom were also interview participants. After this initial consent was gained, I would introduce myself to others at the site with reference to my research, e.g. at the Arabic school I often had the chance to speak with the teachers who would regularly ask about my studies. Although my role at the Arabic school was that of an assistant teacher, none of the observations from this site were made regarding minors or indeed the behaviours or practices of any particular individuals. In many cases, the gatekeepers had informed others of my presence, but in other sites this proved more difficult given the circumstances. This was particularly so in the larger mosques where although I informed leaders and board members of my research, it would have been impossible to inform all congregants present for many reasons: the unpredictability regarding who would be present at any given time, the impossibility of speaking to each congregant given the numbers, and so on. This being the case, my approach was to inform those with whom I had direct conversation of my research. Nonetheless, these issues are perhaps less problematic than would appear in that my observations at such sites were not directed towards any specific individuals, behaviours, or institutional management and practices; but were rather directed towards gaining a clearer understanding of the surrounding context or 'ambiance' (Werbner and Fumanti, 2012) which diasporas create and inhabit. Reflecting on how notions of the 'third space' are often invoked as challenging state hegemony, Werbner and Fumanti (ibid.) highlight that the creation of 'diasporic cultural milieus' does not always represent a challenging of state hegemony, or other hegemonies, but rather:

In this respect, encapsulated diasporas are not concerned primarily to assert multicultural rights. They do not necessarily want to enter into a dialogue with the state. They do not only wish to challenge narratives of nation or try to insert themselves into them. Their (self) recognition happens in the sensually saturated spaces of community halls, family meetings, and devotional and religious events. (2012: 15)

In this way, the fieldwork sites are not taken as objects of study *per se*, but present different 'sensually saturated' arenas in which to explore processes of ethnicisation and hybridisation in translocal Liverpool-Yemeni life. Although many illuminating conversations and interactions took place during the fieldwork period which add to the overall context and texture of the ethnographic material, for the reasons stated above, I have only included direct quotes from individuals who consented to one-to-one interviews and the use of verbatim quotes as stated on the consent form.

Anonymity and confidentiality present the other main ethical consideration. It will first be useful to consider Walford's (2018: 517-20) assertion that no ethnography in the digital age can ever guarantee complete anonymity, despite the (often) default assumption that all possible steps will be taken to ensure anonymity of participants and sites. This assertion rests upon Walford's ease of identifying 'anonymised' sites from previous studies via online resources (cf. Yuill, 2018 for a similar case). Despite these concerns, a constructivist approach often relies on as full a contextual understanding as possible. Given the importance and salience of locality in this thesis, removing 'Liverpool', 'Toxteth', 'L8' or 'Lodge Lane' would render much of the surrounding context meaningless. Nespor highlights this view, writing:

It [non-anonymisation] requires us to rethink the very idea of sites, settings, and places and to see them as produced by as well as producing social relations. Anonymizing a place suggests that the identities and events that happen there float, so to speak, above or outside specific historical and geographical moments. (2000: 557)

Nonetheless, I have avoided directly naming specific research sites (other than the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival which is a public event) in connection to particular individuals or in the verbatim quotes of participants, instead replacing names of mosques and other institutions with anonymised 'invented' names, or using the more generic terms of '(multi)ethnic mosque', 'Arabic school', and so on. As the research questions highlight that the focus is on how participants relate to these spaces in constructing identities and imagining 'community', rather than the specifics of the sites themselves, direct identification was felt to be unnecessary.

Participants themselves have all been pseudo-anonymised. The question of anonymisation is perhaps now even more keenly felt given the recent introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 in accordance with EU law, which has sparked a number of responses from anthropologists regarding how it may impact the field (Sleeboom-Faulker and McMurray, 2018; Dilger et al., 2018; Yuill, 2018). While ethical approval for this research was gained before the introduction of the GDPR, the process was nonetheless robust and covered Yuill's points that:

> Complying with the GDPR and archiving anthropological research require a more thorough consent process, which must now detail exactly what participants are giving consent for and must encompass participation, personal data usage and future information usage by others. (2018: 37)

Of course, the motives for seeking consent and maintaining transparency with participants are not only due to compliance with the GDPR, but have been a central ethical question in anthropology.[7] The anonymisation of participants is now generally accepted as the default position (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015: 618). While some scholars have

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[7] See Appendices 1-5 for Information Sheets and Informed Consent forms, which detail how the data is used and stored.

challenged this position this thesis agrees with Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger (2015: 618) in 'the need for a contextually-contingent approach to anonymising data'.[8] Giordano et al. (2007: 264-5) note that by maintaining anonymity as the default position, there is a risk of denying participants autonomy or obscuring their 'voice'. Indeed, this is a question which arose several times through interviews, as some participants explicitly stated that they were happy to be identified despite the informed consent form noting that data would be pseudo-anonymised. I did, however, decide to pseudo-anonymise all participants as the default position due to this being stated on the information sheets and informed consent forms, as well as the use of verbatim quotes throughout.[9]

2.5 Positionality and Reflexivity

Hufford writes:

> Observations are all made from somewhere. This recognition may either lead to a pessimistic debunking of all knowledge, or it may help to rehabilitate and broaden our appreciation of the subjective. (1999: 294)

This study takes the latter perspective. Since the reflexive turn of the 1980s in anthropology, considerations of one's own positionality as researcher, often discussed in terms of the insider/outsider debate, are now commonplace. Knott (2005b: 246) writing within the frame of religious studies provides a useful diagram which illustrates the two extremes of 'complete observer' (outsider/etic) and 'complete participant' (insider/emic)

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[8] See Yuill, 2018, for a discussion on the implications of 'unnaming' participants, also Walford, 2005; Giordano et al., 2007.

[9] The informed consent forms alert participants to the possibility of self-identification via verbatim quotes. All interviews were digitally audio-recorded, except for one which was recorded by note-taking, and were saved onto a secure password-protected device without identifying information in the file name. After transcription, audio files were destroyed. Identifying material was removed from the transcriptions which were then associated with a pseudonym. In addition, I have chosen to further 'split' a group of potentially identifiable 'community leaders' into several pseudonyms to reduce the chance of identification with a single individual.

positionalities, as well as the possible intermediate points of 'observer-as-participant' and 'participant-as-observer'. Given that multiple positioned belongings are emphasised in this study, I also consider my own positionality as insider/outsider along several axes, not only the religious (Muslim vs Non-Muslim) but also the local (Scouse vs Non-Scouse), and the ethno-national (Yemeni vs Non-Yemeni).

Both positionalities of 'complete participant' and 'complete observer' pose their own challenges and complexities when undertaking ethnographic research. As Knott (ibid., 247) highlights, the case of Fatima Mernissi reveals that 'complete participant' perspectives can be complex and plural as although she is an 'insider' to Islam, her position as a scholar on Islam is 'contentious': 'Although she has not received the training associated with the *ulama*, she draws on the same sources of authority, though emphasising different stories and offering variant readings'. (ibid. 248). Similarly, 'complete observer' perspectives also pose methodological challenges, notably in that it is difficult 'for even the most determined observers to remain uninvolved, impartial and scientific' (ibid., 250). While my own positionality is, overall, closer to Knott's (2005b: 250) notion of 'observer-as-participant' in that as a non-Yemeni, non-Muslim I participated in various aspects of Liverpool-Yemeni life, I also emphasise various intersections between my identities and that of the participants. As this study is not an exploration of subjective 'religious experience' or particular beliefs, I stress multiple positionalities which at times intersect, and at others differ.

As a Liverpudlian from a working-class neighbourhood, this identity was shared with the Liverpool-born participants who make up the majority of the sample. Within this category, I am a 'complete participant'. In many ways, this shared pool of knowledge was an advantage in that I was already familiar with the neighbourhoods in question, the overall

landscape of Liverpool, Scouse colloquialisms, and other aspects of Liverpool life which participants discussed. I am, however, an 'outsider' to the categories of 'Yemeni' and 'Muslim'. This necessarily means relying on observations and participants' emic accounts which are placed in dialogue with the scholarly, etic understandings. My identity as a non-Yemeni, non-Muslim also made my presence in certain spaces more conspicuous, particularly in religious spaces. In several instances, due to my knowledge of Arabic, it was assumed that I was either partly of Arab heritage, or, wishing to convert. Although I informed all individuals that neither was the case, having knowledge of the Arabic language and an interest in the Arab world proved to be a useful starting point for many conversations. It also allowed me to contribute a service in an Arabic school as a volunteer assistant/teacher such that my observer-as-participant role meant I could 'give something back'. Although the categories of 'Yemeni', 'Muslim', and 'Scouse' are the most salient points of reference in this study, they represent only a number of the many positionalities social actors possess – as has been highlighted, one's gender identity can have significant impacts on which spaces can be accessed (see also Dessing, 2013, for discussion regarding how one's age can also impact negotiations of access).

The above has highlighted the complexities of positionality, particularly in the context of this thesis which takes multiple positioned belongings as its primary object of study. Positionality understood here cannot be adequately described by a single perspective; instead I have emphasised remaining attentive to context and the various ways in which identities can intersect and differ. In brief, although this thesis is by no means an auto-ethnography, my own identity and experiences as a Liverpudlian have shaped this study and the types of question it is asking; but the emphasis is nonetheless on the multiple voices of second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis. Such an approach concurs with Werbner's notion of 'dialogic identities' that

the dialogical necessarily alludes to a far more pervasive condition of sociality and cultural creativity through argument than that which the individual encounter across cultures can capture. (2002a: 8)

2.6 Analysing the Data

Transcripts of interviews and fieldwork notes constituted the primary data for this study. An iterative process to analysing the data was employed. This allowed me to consider the data alongside theory, emerging themes, and developments during the fieldwork period. No specialist software was used to analyse the data. Instead, all transcripts and notes were continuously read and referred to throughout the process. I employed a 'manual' form of coding, in which transcripts and fieldwork notes were highlighted and relevant quotes/sections selected according to several themes which correspond to main concepts of the research questions. These themes can be broadly stated as: ethnicity and its cognates (language, kinship); translocality, the 'nation' and 'community'; Liverpool, L8 and the neighbourhood; and religious identity.

These themes will all be seen to emerge in participants' narrations of identity, but identity itself is also situated and performed in various places, spaces, and events while also being informed by, and forming, part of broader discourses. Thus, the approach to analysing the data is informed by Werbner's (2002a: 7) view that 'It is only by analysing specific social situations…that we can grasp the contingency of culture and identity'. While the iterative process of data analysis has meant drawing from a range of theories and bodies of literature to explore these specific social situations, historical and contemporary, the overall approach was to place individual narrations and embodied cultural performances in dialogue with discourses and social imaginaries of culture, 'community' and (trans)locality. Although 'discourse' and 'social imaginaries' can be mutually constitutive,

it is useful to distinguish them conceptually. Discourse here is understood in Baumann's terms of dominant/demotic discourses of 'culture' and 'community':

> Where the dominant discourse views 'culture' as the reified possession of 'ethnic' groups or 'communities', the demotic discourse questions and dissolves this equation between 'culture ethnos and community'. (1997: 209)

Or, on a more fundamental level, the dominant discourses of 'culture' are those which dominant institutions and bodies employ, while the demotic reflects the everyday negotiations which are often more ambivalent, complex, and multifaceted than the dominant allows for.

The concept of 'social imaginaries' draws upon Taylor's (2004) and Werbner's (2013a) use of this term. Taylor writes that:

> I speak of *imaginary* because I'm talking about the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms…the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy. (2004: 106)

While discourses of culture are constructed, contested, and employed strategically and tactically by institutions and individuals, social imaginaries speak to the pervasive attachments to localities (physical or otherwise) which are always not easily discussed in terms of a specific discourse. Although Liverpool-Yemenis are the focus of the research, it is also important to note Jacobsen's (2010: 106) point from a study on Muslim youth in Norway that diasporic social imaginaries can also include 'trans-ethnic communities that are imagined within, rather than across, the boundaries of the nation state'. Indeed, Toxteth's multi-ethnic character will be seen to be an important element in articulations of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni identities, sometimes more so than a narrowly Yemeni 'community'. Participants' narrations and fieldwork observations are thus

analysed with respect to the specific social situations out of which they arise, the

dominant/demotic discourses of culture and 'community', and how these reflect social

imaginaries of place which, as has been emphasised, may have multiple orientations.

Chapter 3:   Liverpool, Yemen, and Liverpool-Yemenis in Context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter historically and socially situates Liverpool-Yemenis by exploring the existing relevant literature, thus providing necessary context for the following ethnographic chapters. It is divided into three sections: the first introduces Liverpool and Scouse identities, the second introduces salient aspects of Yemen's history and its social imaginaries, and third looks more closely at Yemeni migration to Britain.

The first section introduces Liverpool, focusing on its history as a port city, subsequent immigration, and the resulting sectarianism to give a clearer picture of the context in which a 'Scouse' identity can be seen to emerge, and into which context Liverpool-Yemenis also arrived. It pays particular attention to the construction of non-white identities in the city. The history of Islam in Liverpool and Abdullah Quilliam (himself a white convert) as a notable figure, as well as the more local histories of Toxteth which has long been associated with the city's non-white groups are also considered. Locality-making in the context of Liverpool is framed as 'oppositional', often being constructed and articulated 'against' the nation-state, highlighting what has been termed 'Liverpool exceptionalism' (Belchem, 2006a, 2006b).[10]

The second section introduces Yemen with a focus on two main currents which run through Yemeni discourses of nationalism: one with a focus on Yemen as representing an ethno-national social imaginary of a unifying 'locality' which draws upon its unique

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[10] Credit must also be given to Belchem, whose book *Irish, Catholic and Scouse* (2007) provided inspiration for the title of this thesis.

geographic and historic position within the Arabian Peninsula, its integral role in the

advent of Islam, the role of genealogies and hierarchies, and the shared cultural-linguistic

heritage; and another which focuses on the North-South divide, sectarian differences and

the political make-up of Yemen with reference to Aden and the surrounding region's

experience of British colonialism. It also contextualises the more specific areas of

emigration or areas of particular relevance to Liverpool-Yemenis (Radā', Malāḥ, al-Baydā,

Aden) as represented in the data sample. While religion plays a central role throughout

much of Yemeni history, this chapter also historicises Islam in the Yemeni context to

move away from the notion of Islam and Muslimness as forming a single, monolithic bloc.

The current ongoing conflict in Yemen is also outlined, while noting that such a conflict

inevitably contains many contingencies and therefore the outline presented here does not

cover events which occur after the time of writing (2019).

After establishing the local contexts and histories of Liverpool as the place of immigration,

and Yemen as the place of emigration, the third section looks at the available literature on

British-Yemenis. Yemeni migration to Britain is described as having occurred in two

waves: pre-world war and post-war, as well as a possible third wave. Given the relative

lack of literature on British-Yemenis, and the almost total absence of any works dealing

with Yemenis in Liverpool in particular, the chapter will also draw upon studies which

highlight similar themes from other British-Muslim diaspora groups.

Thus the overall thrust of the chapter is to historicise and contextualise 'Scouse',

'Yemeni', and 'Muslim' identities and the related locality-making processes, again

drawing upon Bauman in comprehending that:

> sociological hermeneutics demands that the continuous and changing aspects of life strategies
> alike be traced back to the social figurations they serve (in a dialectic process of reciprocal

determination) – and forward, to the patterns of daily life in which they find expression. (1992: 11)

3.2 Liverpool

3.2.1 Liverpool: A Port City

A useful starting point for discussion of Liverpool is the notion of 'Liverpool exceptionalism' (Belchem, 2006a), which highlights the unique position Liverpool and its history occupies in the broader context of the UK (see Belchem's works on various aspects of historical and contemporary Liverpool, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2014). Of course, beginning with such a notion may belie my own experiences and perceptions as a Liverpudlian, but it is a sense which has nonetheless been echoed by participants in this study, and by others more generally. While much of Liverpool's history is not unique in global terms, there are certain elements particular to the Liverpool (or more broadly, Merseyside) context which set the city somewhat apart.[11] My aim here is not to demonstrate that Liverpool exists wholly outside of the UK context, but rather to highlight a set of histories and contingencies which are either unique to, or, have arguably had a much greater impact upon Liverpool than elsewhere. Brown (2005: 147) in her ethnography of Black Liverpool writes: 'Liverpool never occupies a middle position on any scale through which British society is understood. The precise means through which Liverpool is made to exemplify Britain also sets the city apart from it.'

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[11] i.e. port cities with high levels of immigration which develop their own distinctive identities is not in itself a unique phenomenon, as will similarly be seen in discussion of Aden.

This understanding allows the thesis to then explore how the resulting context has shaped, or been shaped by, Liverpool-Yemenis. In brief, the main contributing factors to 'Liverpool exceptionalism' explored here can be summarised chronologically in terms of the history and high prevalence of recusancy in South-West Lancashire post-Reformation, Liverpool's involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, high levels of immigration (particularly from Ireland but also China, Africa, and the Caribbean), sectarianism, the development of the Scouse accent and identities, the political climate of Liverpool (particularly Toxteth, see map in previous chapter) during the 1980s, and more recently Liverpool's Capital of Culture 2008 award and the ensuing urban boosterism. Despite there being much written about each of these individual topics, there appears to be no single published comprehensive history of Liverpool (Pooley, 2008, although Belchem's, 2006, edited volume *Liverpool 800* has remedied this somewhat), and much less regarding the history of its non-white inhabitants despite their long and established presence (see Frost, 1996, 2000, 2011; Uduku, 2003; Brown, 2005 for discussion of Liverpudlian Black identities, also Bunnell, 2016 for the Liverpool-Malay diaspora).

It will be worth noting at this point that I use the terms 'Scouse' and 'Liverpudlian' interchangeably. While 'Liverpudlian' is a more neutral term, 'Scouse' is more value-laden and has sometimes been used derogatorily by non-Liverpudlians or can perceived as such when used by non-Liverpudlians. Despite this, 'Scouse' is the more usual and colloquial term of self-designation for those from Liverpool, and therefore as both I and the participants frequently use it in this manner, my usage of it here reflects this. Nonetheless, the association of 'Scouseness' with whiteness has been mentioned by Frost (1996, 2000, also explored in an unpublished thesis by Peschier, 2018) who highlight that representations of 'Scouseness' do not typically include the city's non-white groups. While

this is the case on a representational level, this thesis seeks to explore how everyday

Liverpool-Yemenis creatively combine 'Yemeniness' and 'Scouseness', thereby

demonstrating how the lived reality of 'Scouseness' is not a homogeneous form of white

working-class Liverpudlian culture/identity.[12] Instead, I draw attention to how it is

(re)constructed alongside positioned belongings, such as Yemeni and Muslim, returning

again to Baumann's (1996) notion of demotic discourses which occur below the 'radar' of

official or highly public-facing representations. This is not to say that Liverpool-Yemenis

or other non-white Liverpudlians do not face marginalisation or are excluded by others

from the category of 'Scouse', but rather that framing 'Scouseness' narrowly as only

referring to a white working-class identity ignores that 'Scouse' as a unique identity itself

arose during or shortly after a period of intense migration (Crowley, 2012: 87).[13]

Therefore, at their root, Scouse identities have an element of hybridity comprising of

multiple groups and the subsequent intermingling. Seen this way, it is difficult to discuss

Scouse identities without also acknowledging their hybrid nature. Thus I challenge the

assumptions of 'Scouseness' as equating to white working-class culture and instead argue

that 'Scouse' is best understood as a broad label within which multiple positionalities are

contained, albeit all sharing an attachment to the social imaginary of Liverpool. Any

discussion of Scouse identities must take into account the various and intertwining

histories from which they emerge. Indeed, even within white working-class Scouse

identities, divides can be seen e.g. along sectarian (Catholic and Protestant) lines, although

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[12] Peschier's (2018: 93) unpublished thesis explores Liverpudlian identity as represented in twelve theatre plays in the city, only one of which is reported to have had a non-white actor in a major role. More recent developments may also suggest that greater representation is being partially achieved due to projects such as the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival with a largely Liverpool-Yemeni board, and an increased number of BAME councillors.

[13] Crowley (2012) notes that interest in the distinctive Liverpudlian varieties of English began to grow from the late 1800s (corresponding with the influx of Irish immigrants), before when it was typically described as a rather un-noteworthy variety of Lancashire and/or North-West Midlands speech. Surprisingly, Crowley (2012: 63) also notes that although the cultural category of Scouse was established, the term did not gain widespread usage until the 1950s.

less so nowadays, along geographic lines within the city (Northender vs Southender), along linguistic lines (particular dialectal features), and so on. The important point here is that Liverpool-Yemenis (re)create Scouseness in ways both similar and dissimilar to other Liverpudlians. Therefore, the thesis also adds to the literature by examining new dynamics of the construction of non-white Scouse identities.

The purpose of the following brief overview of Liverpool's history is to foreground the production of locality as 'relational and contextual' (Appadurai, 1996: 178). This again highlights that although the cross-border or transnational aspects of diasporas are often emphasised, the notion of the glocal concerned with reimagining the local in terms of the global is equally as important. In essence, this section first highlights locality on the scale of the city in which Liverpool-Yemenis are embedded, before discussing more narrowly the neighbourhood of Toxteth while also being aware of the broader national contexts which are necessarily implicated in a relational understanding of locality-production. Naturally, many of the histories and contexts involved in this production of locality occurred long before the arrival of Yemenis, but given that production implies a process, the presence of a diaspora embedded in a certain locality itself generates a new context. For a diaspora group, locality takes on an even more complex role as both the 'lived' locality (i.e. Liverpool/Toxteth and all its implied associations) and the localities of the homeland are negotiated, interwoven, and separated. In other words, translocality cannot be understood without first examining the 'localities' in question.

3.2.2 Liverpool Exceptionalism

I argue that the core of 'Liverpool exceptionalism' is essentially a form of locality
production characterised by its various histories being positioned relationally against or in
comparison to the broader narratives of English national history. For Appadurai, this
oppositional nature is perhaps always present in productions of locality on the scale of
'neighbourhood', but his point below can also be applied to Liverpool as a city region. He
writes:

> Neighbourhoods are ideally stages for their own self-reproduction, a process that is
> fundamentally opposed to the imaginary of the nation-state, where neighbourhoods are
> designed to be exemplars of a generalizable mode of belonging to a wider territorial imaginary.
> (1996: 191)

The point here is that Liverpool (at least since its rapid growth throughout the seventeenth
and eighteenth centuries) has been positioned both by the dominant, outside and demotic,
inside discourses as somehow apart from other English cities, resulting in a social
imaginary which is in some ways 'exceptional'. Its physical geography facing the Irish Sea
almost directly across from Dublin, and its imagined position within national discourses
locate Liverpool at a geographical and metaphorical fringe of the 'nation'. Of course,
locality can operate on various scales and therefore this section will first consider the city
as a whole, and then Toxteth as a sub-locality.

While the history of pre-eighteenth century Liverpool may seem to be of little significance
given that the city owes much of its current state to the major role it played in transatlantic
slavery (Morgan, 2007:15), I would like to highlight that elements contributing to
'Liverpool exceptionalism' can be traced back further by looking at the context of South
West Lancashire in the post-reformation period. The predominance of Catholicism in

Liverpool and surrounding regions is often attributed to the influx of migrants from Ireland

escaping the famine conditions, leading to a rapid population growth throughout the mid to

late 1800s.[14] While this is certainly the main contributing factor to Liverpool's association

with Catholicism and one aspect of the city's history which sets it apart, the existence of

large numbers of recusants in the vicinity of Liverpool (making up the majority in some

areas) predating the Irish influx should not be overlooked (cf. Blackwood, 1976; Haigh,

1981).[15] Taking this into account, it can be argued that the ensuing and entrenched conflict

between anti-Catholics and recusants began to lend the Merseyside region a distinct

dynamic which was less pronounced or absent elsewhere in England.

Although the region was characterised by its entrenched recusancy, Liverpool itself does

not appear to have been of major importance until its rapid growth in the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. Honeybone (2008: 112, Table 1) illustrates the growth from a

population of approximately only 690 in 1561, to 493,405 by 1871. Belchem (2007: 30)

notes that by 1841, the Irish-born population was 49,839, or 17.3% of the population, and

by the 1870s this had risen to a reported 180,000 or just over one third of the population,

most of whom were reported as engaged in some form of 'unskilled manual labour' (ibid.,

39). This is important to note as the majority of migrants who arrived in the city were

labourers rather than 'cosmopolitan élites' (although Belchem's, 2007, study does also

reveal that not all Irish arrivals were unskilled labourers) thus contributing to Liverpool's

strongly working-class demographics. It was also during this period of rapid growth that

migrants from elsewhere began to arrive in Liverpool primarily due to their employment

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[14] Morgan (2007: 15) notes that between 1801 and 1807, slave ships leaving from the Mersey accounted for 79 percent of the total leaving Britain.

[15] Blackwood (1976: 1) notes: 'apart from Monmouth, Lancashire was the most Catholic shire in seventeenth- century England, and that in response to the challenge from Rome Puritanism gained in strength between 1600 and 1642'. He (ibid) notes: 'In 1643 a Parliamentary newspaper portrayed Lancashire as a region where a small Puritan population struggled heroically against hordes of 'papists'.'

aboard ships. Brown (2005: 19) notes regarding the early twentieth century that 'Shippers based in Liverpool and other ports also hired Afro-Caribbeans, Lascars, Chinese, Liberian, Arab and Somali seamen in large numbers' while also noting the difficulty in specifying how many settled in Liverpool. Indeed, as the following sections will discuss, Yemenis do not appear to have settled in Liverpool in any significant amount until the late twentieth century.

3.2.3 Sectarianism in Liverpool

Although sectarianism arising from the presence of recusancy in the region has a long history, it took a different trajectory following the large influx of Irish escaping the trauma of the famine between the years 1845-9 and its aftermath (Neal, 1988: x). Indeed, Belchem (2007: xii) notes that the dynamics of sectarianism changed greatly in that 'Irish and Catholic became synonymous in Liverpool, an ethno-sectarian formulation which served to exclude the considerable number of Protestant migrants'. The impacts of this sectarianism have been long-lasting, as Neal (ibid., ix) highlights:

> Anyone born and raised in working-class Liverpool in pre-slum clearance days could not fail to be aware of religious differences within that society and, in many instances, these had deleterious consequences for friendships and families (1988: ix).[16]

This sectarianism can be summarily described as stemming from continued animosities between Irish Catholics and Orange Protestants leading to periods of sectarian violence and conflict, ultimately producing sub-localities within Liverpool divided along these lines (see Crowley, 2012: 115-43 for further discussion, also Belchem 2007: Chapter 2 for 'The Spatial Dimensions of Irish Liverpool'). Despite this, sectarian conflict and violence has

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[16] The slum clearances began in the late 1960s continuing through the early 1970s.

largely disappeared from Liverpool although many still continue to identify with their (Irish) Catholic or (Orange) Protestant heritage. It is, then, unsurprising that Liverpool during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was variously portrayed as a prospering hub of international trade, and, a city characterised by its sectarianism and poor living conditions – both of which set it apart in the popular imagination.

Although tempting as it may be to imagine a cross-ethnic working-class solidarity existing between the Liverpool-Irish and other groups in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it seems that an Irish identity did not necessarily mean extending sympathies to those of other ethnicities, as exemplified by the observation that towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Irish-dominated north end of the city 'had become no-go territory for blacks.' (Belchem, 2005: 151). Therefore, although 'Scouse' as a relatively recent term typically refers to a city-wide form of identity, a closer and more nuanced examination reveals that various localities below the city-wide scale were being produced, each according to its own histories and contingencies, albeit many sharing the common experience of migration.

3.2.4 Abdullah Quilliam

Another significant aspect of Liverpool's Victorian-era history is the figure of Abdullah Quilliam (1852-1932), a Liverpudlian convert to Islam formerly known as William Henry Quilliam, who founded the Liverpool Muslim Institute and British Muslim Association (Geaves, 2010: 3).[17] Geaves' (2010) book-length study *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam,* alongside others such as Gilham and Geave's (2017)

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[17] Geaves (ibid.) notes that this was two years before the opening of the Woking Mosque, and 'there is no doubt that the first attempt to promote Islam publicly from within a mosque and an Islamic centre in Britain took place in Liverpool over the following twenty years'.

edited volume *Victorian Muslim: Abdullah Quilliam and Islam in the West,* provide a thorough account of Quilliam's life and activities which need not be reproduced in full here. Rather, I would like to highlight that Islam in Liverpool (as with many other aspects of the city's history) has a rather unique story which has only recently resurfaced on a larger scale, as evidenced by the increasing number of studies on Quilliam and the re-opening of the Liverpool Muslim Institute in 2007 (see Gilham, 2015; Gilham and Geaves eds., 2017; Kindermann, 2019).

Geaves (2010: 131) describes Quilliam as the first 'multiculturalist', noting that 'He was not a new migrant struggling to overcome economic and class disadvantages, but a highly respected and successful lawyer belonging to the city's elite class' who became recognised as 'the Sheikh al-Islam of Britain' by the Ottoman Sultan (ibid., 75), thereby placing him in a much more influential position to advocate on behalf of the city's Muslim population. While Quilliam's congregations were likely largely made-up of the city's seafaring men arriving from the Arab world and Pakistan, it is notable that Quilliam reportedly oversaw the conversion of over 500 British men (ibid., 6) leading to what has been termed 'Britain's first indigenous Muslim community' (Gilham, 2015: 39). Although Quilliam's efforts and the founding of the Liverpool Muslim Institute enabled the flourishing of Islam in Victorian Liverpool, after his death the Institute closed and there is little to suggest a direct continuation between Muslim migrants (including Yemenis) who settled in Liverpool several decades later and Quilliam's legacy. Indeed Gilham (2015: 37) writes that after Quilliam's death 'lacking an institutional base, the majority of Liverpool converts appear to have either lived out their days as nominal Muslims or drifted from Islam'. Nonetheless, in line with the growing interest in Liverpool's Muslim heritage, the Abdullah Quilliam Society acquired the Bougham Terrace premises in 2005, which was home to Quilliam's Liverpool Muslim Institute, and, re-opened in 2014 as a mosque with

plans for further renovation (Gilham 2015: 39). Geaves (2010: 284) notes that 'the Mosque and Islamic Centre at Bougham Terrace remain a ruin after many years of service as Liverpool's Registry of Birth, Marriages and Deaths.' This is, however, no longer the case as my fieldwork visits to mosque were greeted by a renovated and fully-functioning prayer hall, as well as ambitious renovation plans for a *wuḍū'* area (used for ritual purification) and a restoral of the Victorian-style kitchens.

Before looking more closely at Toxteth in the next section, it is worth considering that despite Liverpool's recent history being so closely bound up with Irish immigration, 'Irishness' in Liverpool has largely been absorbed into the fabric of the city, now most explicitly visible through its expression in Catholic churches, schools, and the Liverpool Irish Centre. The decline in consciously asserted Irish identities in Liverpool has been attributed in part to the miserable inter- and post-war socio-economic conditions, increased scrutiny of the Liverpool-Irish during the years leading up to and following Ireland's independence, post-war slum clearance, and perhaps most importantly that 'the Liverpool-Irish slummy, emblematic of the Liverpudlian struggle against adversity, misperception and misrepresentation, came to be inscribed as the prototypical 'scouser'.' (Belchem, 2007: 11). This trajectory of 'Scouseness' seen through a more diaspora-oriented lens would suggest, then, that a Scouse identity is firmly rooted in the diasporic experience, albeit having now largely cast off its diasporic attachments and becoming reconfigured in the social imaginary of Liverpool. Indeed the production of a (white) Scouse identity can be described in terms of how the multicultural triangle and the ensuing tensions have unfolded in a diaspora context: ethnicity (Irish vs. English), nationhood (Ireland vs. England), religion (Catholic vs. Protestant).

This being the case, I argue that although (white) 'Scouseness' with its roots in the Irish diasporic experience has become the mainstream or even normative one, it is not the only one. This recalls the point that diaspora and its associated identities is processual, continuously negotiating a myriad of histories and reimagining itself. The following section will therefore look at Toxteth more closely given that this is the area of the city with the greatest concentration of Yemenis, as well as a particular set of histories closely connected to non-white Scouse identity- and locality-making. I will then discuss why the Scouse accent can be considered a powerful identity marker which transcends ethnic and religious differences.

3.2.5 Toxteth

Nationally, Toxteth (more often known simply as L8 locally) is perhaps best known for a series of riots which took place there in 1981, garnering much media attention (see Butler, 2020, for an analysis of 496 newspaper articles on the topic). This lead to the popular image of Toxteth as a lawless inner-city 'racial hotspot' in a city already facing high levels of deprivation and stigmatisation (Uduku, 2003: 126). First, however, it will be useful to consider Toxteth during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As has been suggested, the high levels of migration to Liverpool during this period led to various areas throughout the city being divided along ethnic or religious lines, with the north end being predominantly Catholic and Irish. The south end, where Toxteth lies, was where the majority of the city's black population and, to a lesser extent, other non-white ethnic groups settled. The image of this area as a 'no go' zone, distinct from elsewhere in the city, was already firmly in place by the early twentieth century. Belchem (2007: 59) reports that the local Catholic press from the early twentieth century 'sought to redirect the critical

public gaze [from the poor living conditions of the Irish northern end of the city] to "darker" aspects of urban morphology in the south end of the city'.

While the Irish migration to Liverpool was precipitated by the famine, migration from elsewhere (particularly West Africa, the Caribbean, China, Malaysia, and Yemen) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was predominantly characterised by seafaring men employed aboard ships arriving in Liverpool and subsequently settling (Belchem, 2007: 316; Boland, 2008: 357). Brown (2005: 1-3) recounts that although Toxteth (or L8) later became a synonym for 'Black people', one of her participants emphasised that the early seafaring community was actually centred around Pitt Street, slightly outside of what is usually considered Toxteth.[18] Nonetheless, Toxteth became an area characterised, and set apart, by its divided yet heterogeneous nature and which became increasingly important as a site of locality making for the Liverpool-born black community.[19] Toxteth today is still an area of contrasts and diversity which provide visual clues to its history – wide boulevards and grand houses attest to Liverpool's prosperous past, with adjoining narrow streets of tightly-packed terraces evoking the working-class history of the area. While the area still has a Liverpool-born Black presence, more recent demographic developments have led to visible changes in Toxteth: the Granby area once associated strongly with the Liverpool-born Black community is now characterised by its Somali and Middle Eastern inhabitants (see Uduku, 2003: 141 for fuller discussion on demographic changes in the Granby area).

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[18] The area around Pitt Street is still, however, home to Liverpool's China Town. It is also no coincidence that a nearby street is named 'Jamaica Street'.

[19] Brown (2005) further demonstrates how locality operates on various scales, as within Toxteth particular neighbourhoods such as Granby were identified as significant to constructions of Liverpool-born black identities.

The Toxteth riots themselves were almost universally portrayed negatively, emphasising the area's 'criminality' and social problems without addressing the underlying causes. Butler (2020: 1) notes that in her analysis of many hundreds of articles on the riots, less than ten percent featured Liverpool-born black voices. This dominant discourse has been challenged in particular by scholars such Brown (2005), Frost (2011) and Butler (2020) who reveal through the residents' voices how the riots were motivated by the socio-economic hardships and lived realities of those from the area. The discourse of the riots framing Liverpool-born Blacks as causing unnecessary disruption in the region has also met with strong criticism, as Brown notes:

> Black people's pent-up anger over everyday forms of racism as well as their second-class citizenship was directed at the police, for being both perpetrators of racist abuses and visible embodiments of the state. And as in other demonstrations, here, too, Blacks and Whites joined in common cause against the police.[20] (2005: 65)

The extent to which Liverpool-Yemenis participated in the riots is unclear, although Halliday (2010: 55) notes that 'the Yemeni shops were largely left alone'. Yemeni participation in the riots notwithstanding, it is contextually important that Toxteth was already a focal point in the construction of non-white Scouse identities before any significant number of Yemenis settled in the area. Toxteth plays a complex and multifaceted role in relation to Scouse identities and locality making – it is at once set apart culturally from other Liverpool regions, while simultaneously representing a highly localised microcosm of Liverpool's migrant and class histories. While authors such as Frost (2000: 214) clearly demarcate 'Black' and 'Scouse' identities, writing 'Black

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[20] Brown (ibid.) traces the eruption of the riots to the attempted arrest of a young Liverpool-born Black man amidst the general atmosphere of frustration and anger which had been building in the area, resulting in three days of intense riots in which several buildings were burnt down. Uduku (2003: 126) notes there were also riots in the area in 1973 and 1985.

identity in Liverpool has historically been created by a number of processes, including the exclusion of black people from 'Scouse' identity and the positive assertion and construction of black identity by the community itself', I agree with Boland's (2010: 13) counter point that in more recent years 'Frost's generalization that Scouse is exclusively White is not universally held amongst different ethnic groups in the city.' The role of Toxteth in the construction of non-white Scouse locality and identity is, therefore, multifaceted and ambivalent. Indeed, Frost and Catney (2019: 7) have more recently emphasised the role of the multi-ethnic landscape of Toxteth in the formation of identities, noting: 'Alternative narratives from interviews with residents emphasised belonging as rooted in a history and culture around diversity and local struggles that imbued a strong sense of pride of place.' The idea that Toxteth has become re-imagined as multi-ethnic locality in which diverse friendships and solidarities take place, particularly since the demographic shifts of the late 1990s and 2000s, will be returned to throughout the ethnographic chapters. The particular legacy of multicultural and 'race relations' policies in the aftermath of the 1981 riots will be considered more closely in Chapter 5 which explores Yemeni-led 'community' building. The rise of a dominant discourse of 'Liverpool Cosmopolitanism' amidst efforts to rebrand the city from the mid-2000s concurrent with the European Capital of Culture award alongside national agendas such as 'Community Cohesion' will also be seen to impact the trajectory of Yemeni-led 'community' building in Toxteth.

3.2.6 Language and Locality

Having briefly surveyed important moments of Liverpool's history with reference to the construction of Scouse identities, this section will consider the role of the Scouse accent as

a salient marker of Scouse identities, white and non-white. Belchem (2006a: 33) notes 'Their [Scouse] identity is constructed, indeed it is immediately established, by how they speak rather than by what they say.' Many of the processes involved in creating Scouse identities are inextricably linked with the city's working-class history such that the Scouse accent can be considered to index a working-class background (see Grant and Grey eds., 2008). Nonetheless, Boland (2010: 8) notes that despite its working-class connotations, Scouse itself contains various nuances such as 'Posh Scouse' or 'Scally Scouse'. Accent, or dialect, is thus an important aspect of locality and identity production, as Keating (2015: 249) notes that: 'People create a sense of localness through certain forms of speech and ways of speaking dialects or language varieties.'

The direct link between local varieties of a language and specific locations is, however, increasingly blurred in the globalising age as transnationalism and translocality give rise to complex multilingual environments. It has also been noted that younger speakers in many European countries are now using less distinctively regional forms of language (ibid.). This is not the case for Scouse which remains an important (if not the most important) marker of Scouse identity with some studies suggesting that it is 'getting Scouser' (Rookwood, 2012: 99; see also Grant and Grey eds., 2008) There is also evidence to suggest that rather than declining in usage or distinctiveness, the Scouse accent is influencing or even displacing the accents of younger generations in peripheral towns such as Ormskirk, concurrent with the positive rebranding of Liverpool and 'Scouseness' (West, 2015, unpublished thesis, *Accent variation and attitude on the Merseyside/Lancashire border*).

Given Liverpool's history, it is not surprising that the Scouse accent stands out markedly from its surroundings – indeed, it rapidly disappears as one moves not even 20 miles

outside of the city. Boland (2010: 6) highlights the importance of Scouse in constructions of Scouse identities which are often defined along accent-lines by those from within the region, making a clear geographical 'Scouse' region difficult to define as the accent is not only confined to the relatively recently created Liverpool City Council region. Brown's (2005) work also highlights that Liverpool-born Black participants consider the Scouse accent an important marker of identity, e.g. she quotes a participant who says: 'We only know one language, that's Liverpudlian' (ibid., 157). As the production of the social imaginary of Liverpool has been framed as oppositional to other 'English' or 'British' localities and identities (and indeed echoes as such by several participants as seen in the ethnographic chapters), the continued strength and importance of the accent in Scouse identities can also be said to operate similarly.

3.2.7 Liverpool the Signifier

As identity is constructed through a range of social processes and experiences, including language, it is clear that multiple Scouse identities exist within the city and to suggest there exists a single unified form of 'Scouseness' would ignore the often highly-localised dynamics and histories through which non-white Scouse identities are constructed. At the same time, however, it is important to acknowledge shared experiences and histories on the city-wide scale. That is to say, the city region and Scouse identity are often not perceived as subsets of an overarching British identity (although the national context nonetheless exerts influence as locality is produced relationally), but are placed in direct opposition to it by both the dominant and demotic discourses – a clear example being the 'Scouse Not English' banners at many football games. Similarly, Rookwood (2012: 100) highlights that 'Particularly during Thatcher's conservative governance, many amongst the local population came to feel a sense of alienation, increasingly defining their local Scouse

identity against Englishness.' Such an oppositional framing is, however, not completely unique to Liverpool as England's North-South divide is also often expressed similarly. Nonetheless, the unique histories of Liverpool also set it apart somewhat from the rest of England's 'North', as Frost summarises thus:

> it can be distinguished by the facts that it did not share the same industrial history as many other northern towns…that 'Scouse', the local vernacular, is not north-sounding, and that, unlike its northern neighbours, there was little domestic internal migration, most of its 'immigrants' coming from outside (2000: 196)

My point is, then, to highlight that in Liverpool 'place' is experienced and constructed with a particular intensity for many people, standing in an uneasy relationship with the 'nation'. I argue that it is this relationship to the social imaginary of Liverpool which allows the notion of 'Scouse identities' rather than 'a' Scouse identity; each constructed out of its own unique histories, but nonetheless sharing an intense connection to the signifier 'Liverpool'. Brown's (2005) ethnography demonstrates this, in that constructions of locality in Liverpool which emphasise (and arise out of) its 'apartness' are also drawn upon by Liverpool-born Blacks, leading her to conclude (rather dramatically) that:

> Perhaps the people of Liverpool do not live in a city after all. Rather, they seem to live in an elaborate signifier. In contrast to Britain, evoked through the white cliffs of Dover, Liverpool's physicality is satanic (perhaps like its people?). Liverpool is a place apart. (2005: 130)

The notion of the particular (and oppositional) social imaginary of Liverpool, and its importance as a broad 'signifier' not limited to only one ethnic group or set of histories will be a theme running throughout the ethnographic chapters. While 'oppositional' Scouse identities reflect demotic, often highly localised, discourses and articulations, this is not to say that Liverpool exists outside of the nation. Indeed Belchem's (2014) study *Before the Windrush: Race relations in 20th-century Liverpool* highlights pervasive

experiences of racism and exclusion of non-white Liverpudlians which were not only due to local factors, but must also be placed in the national context of 'Britain's uneasy (and incomplete) transition to a post-colonial (and post-industrial) multi-cultural society' (Belchem, 2014: xviii). Thus this section has highlighted that the role of the state in Liverpool has, since the city's dramatic growth and high levels of immigration, also been characterised by confrontation of 'difference' – initially marginalised, Liverpool-Irish have become incorporated into the nation-state and in many ways came to represent the dominant and/or normative 'Scouse' identity. This process was not unproblematic, however, as the 'oppositional' nature of Scouse identities attests to the ambivalent relationship between Liverpool and nation. Belchem (2014) and others such as Frost (2000, 2011) highlight that for the city's non-white inhabitants, national 'racial ideologies' contributed to further and longer-standing forms of marginalisation and therefore 'The apparent uniqueness of Liverpool has to be seen in the wider contexts of national and international influences' (Frost, 2000: 196). This being the case, Chapter 5 in particular considers how the more recent national agendas of 'Community Cohesion' and 'Prevent' have impacted Yemeni-led 'community' building in Liverpool.

3.3 Yemen

3.3.1 Yemen: Arabia Felix and its Social Imaginaries

Ethnographic studies which explore innumerable facets of contemporary life in the UK are abundant, the same is not true for Yemen, however. Now considered one of the poorest parts of the Arab world with an especially tumultuous history throughout the last millennium, and currently facing a conflict with devastating impacts, it nonetheless occupies a unique place geographically and historically in the Arabian Peninsula. Conflict and political turmoil have undoubtedly limited ethnographic research in the region, but a number of scholars have contributed to a body of literature which allows a glimpse, albeit somewhat fragmented, into everyday Yemeni lives. While much of the literature on Liverpool cited in the above section resonated on a personal level given my own experiences, this section relies entirely on the literature, guided by participants' own articulations, to contextualise Yemen. Nonetheless, I would like to highlight that an overarching sense of Yemen as a unique yet often overlooked corner of the Arab world emerges from this literature. Although I am wary of over-stating both Liverpudlian and Yemeni 'exceptionalism', Bidwell (1983: 7) notes regarding pre-Islamic Yemen that 'For a brief while it appeared that Yemeni particularism might prove too strong to accept a faith from outside its own borders', highlighting Yemen's historical and geographical separateness from elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula shortly before Islam was fully embraced. Dresch (1989: 1) also notes 'Until recently, Yemen was distinguished from the rest of the peninsula by mountain ranges and by its place in the Arabic tradition, not by the boundaries of nation-states'.

While the above section is firmly rooted in Liverpool as a city region, given that this research began without prior knowledge of which parts of Yemen would become salient,

this section now provides an overview of some important aspects of Yemen's history and position in the Arab world before looking more closely at Radā', Malāḥ and Aden – regions which were particularly significant to Liverpool-Yemenis. While a more narrowly-focused social history of Radā' (which represents the main region of emigration among the sample of participants, discussed in the next section) would be beneficial, the very limited amount of literature on this region means a broader focus has been taken in this section. The main themes discussed here nonetheless emerged as relevant to the ethnographic chapters and analysis and will be discussed further in the relevant chapters alongside the ethnographic material.

As Yemen is one of few parts of the peninsula which, owing to its geography and topography, support agriculture to an extent not found further north (Varisco, 2009: 382-3), it has a rich civilisational history pre-dating Islam; so much so that the Romans gave the area the epithet 'Arabia Felix' (Happy Arabia) due to its prosperity. Yemen is also often credited with being the 'birthplace of the Arabs', a statement which many participants also echoed, and although it may not be entirely accurate, the early history of the Arabs invariably includes Yemen as an important location (Dresch, 1989: 3). In short, according to Arab genealogies, Arabs ultimately descend from the semi-legendary figures of Qaḥṭān or 'Adnān, with Qaḥṭān being considered 'the father of Yemen'. (Dresch, 1989: 3). Mahoney, writing on the construction of genealogies in medieval South Arabia, highlights the importance of the Arab genealogical tradition, noting:

> Genealogy was a key concept and practice for the wider tribal community of Arabia in the early medieval period. Its diverse manifestations offered a distinct view of the deep past through constellations that structured the relationships among the various nomadic and sedentary groups who resided in the broad expanse of the peninsula. (2016: 165)

Of course, ascertaining the veracity of such genealogies (*nasab* in Arabic) which emphasise an essentialist notion of an Arab ethnicity reaching into the ancient past is not the question in focus here; rather I include it to demonstrate that Yemen within the Arab historical tradition occupies a specific position. From one angle, such genealogies can be understood as powerful forms of (ethnic) boundary-making within an Arab context which seek to fix boundaries in the remote past via a form of biological determinism, but which are nonetheless constructed, (re)produced and continually reasserted as part of the lived present (Mahoney, 2016; see also Nevola's, 2015, unpublished ethnographic thesis). However, while some accounts suggest that Yemenis are able to recite their entire genealogy dating to the early or even pre- Islamic period, Dresch highlights that this is not the case, thereby emphasising how these genealogies are creatively re-imagined to situate the present in the past, and vice-versa:

> The men of the tribe speak of themselves as "from one forebear" (min jadd wāḥid)…Men do not, on the whole, take this idiom to describe personal descent…The idiom of shared ancestry is not elaborated with detailed descent lines, and it is unusual to meet a tribesman who can, without consulting old land-deeds and the like, name any more distant forebear than his great-grandfather. (1989: 78)

Relatedly, social hierarchy in Yemen has also received scholarly attention, with Bidwell (1983: 2) writing 'The social stratification, which was almost a caste system, also survived…practically intact', locating its origins in the Himyarite period. Furthermore, Nevola's (2015) unpublished ethnographic thesis on social hierarchy in Yemen demonstrates that individuals continue to link their personal genealogies to these macro-genealogies of Qaḥṭān and 'Adnān, highlighting how they are used to (re)produce and legitimise the division of labour. The next chapter considers when or how Liverpool-Yemenis draw upon these genealogies and social hierarchies in articulating Yemeni identities and whether such genealogically-based systems of hierarchy have any bearing on

the Liverpool context. As these genealogies are highly culturally-embedded, holding little meaning for people unfamiliar with Arab history, they represent a form of an ethno-national imaginary which, given their nature as describing and re-imagining social relationships, can only continue to hold relevance if a diasporic consciousness is present. If diaspora entails connections to people and places elsewhere, then placing oneself firmly within such a genealogy despite birth or residence outside of Yemen can reveal the extent to which Liverpool-Yemenis negotiate strategies of identity articulation in maintaining a diasporic consciousness and/or how such constructs may lose relevance or adopt new meaning.

It will now be useful to briefly discuss the trajectory of Islam in Yemen which forms an important part of its social imaginary. It is worth noting that although Yemen's geography separates it somewhat from the peninsula, South Arabian tribes had active trading connections with tribes further north, including the Quraysh of Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad's own tribe, before the arrival of Islam. So much so, that King notes:

> While the painted decoration of the Ka'ba covered much or all of the interior of the building, the exterior was without paintings, adorned instead with the kiswa, a cloth cover. Its origins are said to be Yemeni, the first kiswa brought to Mecca by the Yemeni Tubba' Asad Abu Karib Himyari some time before the advent of Islam (2004: 220)

I emphasise this point as unlike areas which were conquered or embraced Islam later, Yemen was already embedded in and formed part of the continuum of the social networks in the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula, the context out of which Islam arose (see also Bashear, 1989, *Yemen in Early Islam: An Examination of Non-Tribal Traditions*). The region also contributed significant amounts of its population to newly conquered areas of the Islamic world, e.g. Bidwell (1983: 7) notes 'parts of the Hadhramawt were almost depopulated: families claiming Yemeni origins may be still be found on the Atlantic coast

of Morocco'.[21] Nonetheless, after the rapid expansion of Islam which led to it becoming a dominant force across much of the Middle East, North Africa, Iran and South Asia, and as the centres of political power moved further from the central-southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen became regarded as 'a distant province of the vast Arab Empire' (ibid.).

The religious landscape in Yemen today is characterised by the existence of a roughly equal number of Sunni (of the Shāfi'i *madhhab* in particular) and Zaydi Muslims (Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells, 2010: 285). The divide is not even throughout the country, however, with Zaydism being concentrated in the North and Sunni Islam in the South (see also Vom Bruck, 2010; King, 2012).[22]

Despite this split, Dresch (1989, 2000) has noted that Yemen's main axes of divide rarely centre on theological or purely sectarian disputes, but are more clearly due to competition of resources as evidenced by a long history of incursions from the northern (and majority Zaydi) arid parts of the region into the more agriculturally-rich regions of the central and southern highlands resulting in animosity and mistrust (Dresch, 1989: 11-12). Dresch (2000: 6) notes that 'the natural ecologies of these regions [the Zaydi north and Sunni south]…are different, and the relation of ecology to power is perhaps a key'. A more thorough discussion of the implications of the contemporary landscape of Islam in Yemen will be discussed alongside the ethnographic material in Chapter 6.

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[21] Ḥaḍramawt is located in the Eastern half of Yemen with a long history of emigration. It will be seen to be significant in Chapter 6.

[22] This split originates in Islam's early history as part of the broader Sunni-Shi'i divide stemming from disputes over succession after Muhammad's death. Summarily, Zaydism is distinguished from Sunni Islam and other Shī'a sects by the belief that: 'the son of the fourth Imam was the true successor based on his argument that the Imamate can be claimed by any descendant of Ali and Fatima who is pious, learned and who comes out openly to make his bid' (Geaves, 2010: 28).

3.3.2 The North/South Divide and Colonial Aden

While the social imaginary of Yemen outlined above is rooted in the region's ancient past with discourses stressing Yemenis' shared cultural and genealogical histories, Yemen's more recent histories of nation building are complex, conflicted, and contested. Although Wedeen (2008: 25) notes that this social imaginary (or 'imagined unities' in her words) was drawn upon particularly from the 1920s in various Yemeni nationalist movements, there were 'processes leading to the formal creation in the 1960s of two separate and independent nation-states' (ibid., 27). Therefore it is important to place these 'imagined unities' in the context of Yemen's pervasive North/South divide.

Between the rise of Zaydism in the ninth century until Britain's occupation of Aden in 1838, Yemen was ruled by various dynasties contesting for power with Zaydi rule becoming increasingly solidified in the north with smaller dynasties ruling in the south, although both were marked by continuous clashes and conflict. While Upper and Lower Yemen already had apparent divergences due to the differing geographies, availability of resources, religious splits, and political situations by the time of British colonial rule, Cause (1988: 34) notes that 'British Colonialism in South Yemen, dating from 1839, created and solidified the political split between North and South Yemen'. Nonetheless, Upper and Lower Yemen were not necessarily felt as entirely separate entities due to the common cultural and linguistic background(s) shared by the Yemen region as a whole. This highlights that despite political dis-unity, there were 'Important historical antecedents to Yemen's twentieth-century "imagined unities"', including the mention of Yemen in the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and its overall location and conception within early (South) Arabian history. (Wedeen, 2008: 25)

The British 'rebranding' of Aden as a commercial port city dramatically altered its course as it moved from a cluster of small villages, to a major urban centre with nearly 150,000 inhabitants by the mid twentieth century (Carapico, 1998: 23). The Aden Protectorate 'was the only place in what is now called the Arab world to have been governed as part of the Bombay Presidency and the government of India, a status that it held until it was transferred to the British Colonial Office in 1937' (Willis, 2009: 24). Indeed, Willis (ibid.) goes as far as to characterise colonial Aden as being far more closely aligned to India in terms of the politico-legal system and its incorporation into the Indian colonialist project.[23] Aden, with a newly imposed legal system and increasingly policed borders designed to prevent migration from the hinterlands (Wedeen, 2008: 29), developed an identity not shared with the wider Yemen region.[24] This is important as it will be seen in the following section that while the majority of Yemeni migration to Britain occurred via Aden due to it being a colonial metropole, most Yemeni migrants were not Adeni themselves. Bujra (1970: 191) notes that Aden's large non-Arab population consisting mostly of other commonwealth citizens (i.e. Muslim Indians, Pakistanis, Iranians, Egyptians and Somalis) were absorbed into an Adeni identity, adopting 'all the diacritical marks and style of life of the Adenese'. Nonetheless, it will be seen that North Yemenis who migrated to the UK via Aden largely did not adopt Adeni identities.

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[23] While the Aden-India connection was certainly identified as a strategic trade route by the British, it is also important to acknowledge that the connection between Yemen and India pre-dates colonial rule as the ports of al-Mukha and Surat were linked by the coffee trade (Willis, 2009: 23).

[24] Wedeen (ibid.) notes 'The Aden Act of 1864, in turn, created a court system, inspired by Indian legal procedures, restricting religious laws to issues of inheritance and personal status.' The hinterlands refer to the British authorities designating Aden as separate from the surrounding region

Ultimately, after escalating tensions and a growing sense of nationalist sentiments resulting in the Radfan Uprising in 1967[25], Yemen was split into two states: the Yemen Arab Republic in the North and the People's Republic of South Yemen, which included the former Aden Protectorate.[26]

In brief, the important points of this section thus far are: a) the existence of a social imaginary or 'imagined unities' of Yemen which look towards the region's (semi-mythologised) past in creating discourses of unity, b) a political and geographic divide most clearly exemplified in the creation of the North and South Yemeni States while noting other intersecting lines of division, and c) the colonial history of Aden and its distinct cosmopolitan, port-city milieu. The majority of Yemenis in Britain arrived prior to the unification of the two states in 1990, and it will be seen that the contested national histories of Yemen remain an important factor in considerations of a Yemeni ethno-national 'community' in Liverpool. The following section provides a brief outline of post-unification Yemen and the impact of the current crisis.

3.3.3 Unified Yemen: A State in Crisis

Discussion of Yemeni national politics in the post-unification (post-1990) period inevitably notes the pervasive instability and the far from smooth transition to unification; this is encapsulated in the title of Phillip's (2011) book *Yemen and the Permanent State of Crisis*. A thorough examination of the history and political context behind the unification

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[25] This uprising was the culmination of the emergence and development of nationalist sentiments in South Yemen throughout the 1960s, with parallels elsewhere in the Arab world, ultimately resulting in the South achieving independence from Britain.

[26] Phillips (2008: 45) notes that Egypt's pro-republican stance aided South Yemen in achieving independence. The Yemen Arab Republic in the North was established several years earlier in 1962 after a revolution which overthrew the Zaydi Hamid al-Din Imamate. Unlike the South Yemeni state (a self-proclaimed socialist state), the Yemen Arab Republic was 'a system of theocratic, hereditary, and absolutist rule, with the Imam controlling all aspects of judicial, administrative, and legislative authority' (ibid. 43).

of the two Yemen's cannot be covered here; rather the point I wish to highlight is modern Yemen's condition as a conflicted state. Thus the starting point of discussion of an ethno-national Yemeni 'community' in this thesis recognises that:

> political order in Yemen is characterized by the systematic involvement of multiple non-state actors. The Yemeni state has never had the ability to enforce rules or held a monopoly over the means of violence based solely on rational-legal logics in any part of Yemen. Its statehood, in other words, has historically been a 'limited' one. (Clausen, 2018: 562)

To highlight, president Ṣāliḥ of unified Yemen (previously president of the North Yemen Arab Republic) retained power for over thirty years, from unification until his ousting in 2012. Furthermore, Wedeen (2008: 70) notes that 'northern' control of the unified Yemen became solidified, leading to oppositional groups questioning Yemen's 'ornamental democracy'. After unification, civil war broke out in 1994 primarily due to unresolved North/South disputes and animosities, some of which are now resurfacing in violent struggles for power.

The current situation in Yemen is bleak. Lackner (2017: 33) notes 'By mid-2017 Yemen faced total humanitarian disaster, its first famine since the 1940s and the world's worst cholera epidemic', and at the time of writing (late-2019) the situation has not greatly improved. Beginning in 2010 and continuing with increasing intensity, Yemen experienced a wave of demonstrations and protests which called for the resignation of the president 'Alī Abdullāh Ṣāliḥ (ibid., 35). Similar protests and uprisings were seen throughout the Arab world in 2011, giving rise to what has been termed the 'Arab Spring'. While the Arab Spring led to periods of intense political conflict and uncertainty in countries such as Egypt, the impacts of which are still tangible, for Yemen, 2011 marks the beginning of what was to become a devastating conflict. By 2015, the 2011 protests had

escalated into what can only be described as a 'civil war dramatically worsened by international intervention' (ibid., 33, for a fuller overview of the situation see Brandt, 2013; Juneau, 2016; Brehony, 2015; Kendall; 2019, see also Darwich, 2018, for Saudi intervention in Yemen).

The current conflict in Yemen means recognising that the national status of a unified Yemen is still very much in dispute, with older and more entrenched north/south, tribal, political, sectarian and personal alliances and disputes continuing to resurface in response to the ever-changing political climate; now with consequences which have embroiled Yemen into an international geopolitical contest, as Brehony outlines:

> The Saudis were reported to be supplying money and arms to tribes in Mahra, Al-Jawf, Shabwa and Hadhramaut from January 2015 to counter the Huthi advance. This suggests that Riyadh and its coalition partners will seek to stir up and exploit tribal groups in many parts of Yemen to fight the Huthis – with the help of Saudi Arabia and its allies. (2015: 246)

This section has emphasised two main points which will be drawn upon in the ethnographic chapters: any discussion of national Yemeni identities or 'communities' are necessarily challenged by the turbulent histories of pre- and post-unification Yemen and the lack of strong national institutions, and that the current conflict has now taken on a global dimension. The role of Saudi Arabia in the current conflict as well as the historical and geographic connections between Saudi and Yemen are of particular note as it will be seen how participants variously assert Yemeni identities against what is perceived as Saudi antagonisms, contemporary and historical.

For Liverpool-Yemenis however, the current conflict is not only a distant or abstract geopolitical contest. The scale of devastation, loss of life, and causalities must be highlighted, the impacts of which are felt across the Liverpool-Yemeni population. A

report made by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) in 2019 highlights the severity of the situation:

> An estimated 80 per cent of the population – 24 million people – require some form of humanitarian or protection assistance, including 14.3 million who are in acute need. Severity of needs is deepening, with the number of people in acute need a staggering 27 per cent higher than last year. Two-thirds of all districts in the country are already pre-famine, and one-third face a convergence of multiple acute vulnerabilities.[27] (UN OCHA, 2019: 4)

3.3.4 Yemen and its Diasporas

Emigration from Yemen is not a new phenomenon, but a fundamental and characteristic aspect of Yemen's history with roots in pre-Islamic times. The North and Western parts of Yemen have historically been orientated towards the Red Sea and the Mediterranean as is evidenced through historic trade links, the appearance of Yemeni mythical figures in the Bible, and indeed the Roman epithet of 'Arabia Felix' (Thiollet, 2014: 268).

In contrast, the South-Eastern half of Yemen, Ḥaḍramawt in particular, is orientated towards the Indian Ocean, as is evidenced by the Ḥaḍrāmī diaspora. Ḥaḍrāmīs are noted as playing 'a prominent role in proselytisation from the fifteenth century AD onwards' (Alatas, 1997: 29) in and around Malaysia, with a resulting diasporic identity centred on the legacies and experiences of migration.[28] Ḥaḍramawt will be seen to be of importance in the Liverpool context in Chapter 6 due to its importance as a centre of Yemeni Sufism.

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[27] Available from: https://yemen.un.org/en/11690-yemen-2019-humanitarian-needs-overview

[28] Ḥaḍramawt continues to occupy a distinct place in terms of culture and identity within Yemen owing to its early implication in migratory networks. Thiollet (2014: 267) notes: 'Between 1914 and 1945, around 30 per cent of Hadramaut's population lived in India, Singapore, Indonesia or East Africa, and the island of Java was home to 70,000 Yemeni residents.'

In the more recent context, labour migration from Yemen has been examined by scholars such as Birks, Sinclair and Socknat (1981) and Chalcraft (2011) who focus on 'oil migration' of Yemenis to Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing Gulf states in the latter half of the twentieth century. Others such as al-Jumly and Rollins (1997: 39) have noted the cultural expressions arising from Yemen's experience with migration, writing 'emigration and its attendant alienation and dispossession had become a dominant theme in Yemeni poetry in response to harsh social and economic conditions'. Not only is Yemen's history so closely bound up with emigration, but immigration to Yemen has also played a significant role, particularly from the Horn of Africa. Somali migration to Yemen is noteworthy as Toxteth is now also home to a sizeable Somali population (see Uduku, 2003), many of whom are in frequent contact with Yemenis or have themselves lived in Yemen. Betts (2013: 160) notes that Yemen 'hosts an estimated 220,000 Somalis', many of whom arrive in Yemen as a 'transit country' or gateway to the wider Middle East and Europe

It is notable, and a remarkable conjunction of contingencies, that the long-standing shared connections between the people of Yemen and the Horn of Africa now also find themselves within the same neighbourhood of Liverpool. In light of this history, the more recently established Somali population alongside Yemenis in Liverpool does not represent an entirely new dynamic, but is rather one which was already present within Yemen and is now being (re)produced in a new context. The following sections will now look more closely at Yemeni migration to Britain, with section 3.4.6 examining the main areas of emigration as represented in the sample.

3.4 Yemenis in Britain

3.4.1 Yemeni Migration to Britain: An Overview of the Literature

Despite Yemenis being present in the UK since at least the nineteenth century, there is only a small body of work which discusses the early migrations and settlement of Yemenis in the UK. Studies looking at contemporary contexts are even fewer. It is unsurprising then that British-Yemenis have been dubbed an 'invisible community' in the literature.

In summary, there are four book-length studies which focus on different aspects and areas of British-Yemeni life, with the historical conditions of migration and the early experiences of British-Yemenis being predominant. Halliday's *Arabs in Exile: Yemeni Migrants in Early Britain* (1992, second edn., 2010, renamed *Britain's First Muslims: Portrait of an Arab Community*) provides a broad account of the history of Yemenis in the UK up until the 1980s. This is not an ethnographic account, however, as personal narratives detailing everyday Yemeni culture, life and identities were largely not covered, focusing instead on the organisational structures, e.g. religious, political, and 'community' organisations. Lawless's (1995) *From Ta'izz to Tyneside* gives a detailed history of Yemenis in South Shields, ultimately painting a rather bleak picture for the continuity of a British-Yemeni identity in South Shields, as 'the Arab population and their descendants have gradually "dissolved" into the general population of South Tyneside' (ibid., 245), citing reasons such as the loss of life during the Second World War, a lack of further Yemeni migration to the region, and high levels of intermarriage. Turning to Sheffield, Searle's (2010) *From Farms to Foundries*, using life-story narratives, focuses on the former Yemeni steelworkers in Sheffield highlighting injustices and racism faced by these men throughout their careers. More recently, Seddon's (2014) *The Last of the Lascars*

gives a broad history of Yemenis in the UK, with a focus on how British-Yemenis are becoming more 'visible'.

In addition to these book-length studies, there are also several articles and unpublished theses which relate to British-Yemenis. Seddon's (2010) article discusses aspects of British-Yemeni-Muslim identities in Eccles in the post-migration context, framed against studies which in which 'identity constructions are viewed almost entirely through the prism of the migration process' (ibid. 558). This article perhaps comes closest in its subject matter to this thesis, asking similar questions regarding 'religious, cultural and national' identity constructions, and therefore deserves some attention. The article concludes that:

> Clearly, being a British Yemeni is not simply a hybrid or hyphenated identity experience, and it cannot be expressed or represented through generalizations or approximations based on dominant discourses on minority ethnicities and cultures. This study has observed that what it actually means to be a ''British Yemeni Muslim'', beyond the collective aspects of communal identities, is usually expressed as a personal experience, an individual narrative or as a new ''Britishness'' of the new Britons. (ibid., 569)

Although this article is useful in presenting rare ethnographic material on contemporary British-Yemeni identities, it is limited by its length and lack of clarity in several aspects. A clearer distinction between the categories and scales of 'nation' versus 'locality' would have allowed more nuanced insights, as Seddon at once asserts new forms of British identities, while also noting that 'this research indicates that a regional or local identity is more pronounced and assimilated than any notions of ''belonging'' to a British national identity' (ibid., 566). Although the article mentions that generalisations based on dominant discourses cannot be made, 'the Yemeni community' and 'British-Yemenis' are frequently invoked as a single group without reference to the specific histories of migration and local context of Eccles. While I agree with Seddon in that a study of the second-generation or the 'post-migration' period opens news avenues and challenges notions of reified

'Yemeniness' or 'Britishness', I also recognize the importance of situating these within (but not only) the historical context of the migration process. Additionally, as much as being a 'British-Yemeni-Muslim' is a personal experience, this is not to say that the construction of these multiple positioned belongings cannot shed light on broader dominant and demotic discourses of culture and 'community', their interrelatedness with productions of locality, and the surrounding social imaginaries in which they are embedded.

An early article on British-Yemenis is Dahya's (1965) *Yemenis in Britain: An Arab Migrant Community* which provides a brief overview of Yemeni migration to Britain touching upon motivations for migration and elements of religious life in the UK. C. Searle and Shaif (1991) have also published a dialogic article in which Searle interviews Sheffield-Yemeni, Shaif, discussing many of the themes which are elaborated in K. Searle's (2010) book (Searle, 2010).

Nagel and Staeheli (2008, 2010) have also published articles regarding Arab activism in the UK. In their 2008 study, several Liverpool-Yemenis were interviewed alongside other British-Arabs, leading to their conclusion that:

> Interviewees consistently reason that British Arabs cannot engage in a meaningful exchange with British society unless their culture—their practices, beliefs and outward appearance— is recognized and positively evaluated. (2008: 425)

These findings again hint at the 'invisible' nature of British-Arab communities in that recognition and representation of 'Arab' culture in the broader public sphere is lacking, and indeed several of the activists in their study state that one motivation for their activism is 'to raise awareness of Arab issues partly in terms of fostering an alternative understanding of Arabs and the Arab and Muslim world to a wider British audience.'

(ibid., 426). They (ibid.) emphasise a shared British-(pan-)Arab identity across the UK centred around social networks, consumption of Arabic products, and shared interest in Arab political causes. While Nagel and Staeheli's studies are illuminating, the broad pool of participants from within the category 'Arab' across localities and the particular emphasis on 'activists' may lead to rather different conclusions from a study such as this with a narrowly local focus on 'everyday' or 'ordinary' subjectivities. There is also a need to recognise that in such a fine-grained study, the label 'British-Arab' could misleadingly imply a sense of intra-Arab connections across the whole 'British-Arab' population.

 Finally, a number of studies on British-Muslims such as Ansari's (2004) '*The Infidel Within*' do mention Yemenis, albeit briefly and with much of the same historically-focused material that Halliday (1992) presents.

This section has highlighted the lack of literature on British-Yemenis: not only are there very few works on the subject, but Yemenis are also largely absent within the broader literature on British-Muslims, and more narrowly, within the literature on Liverpool.[29] Thus this thesis aims to address this gap while being cognisant of the contexts and scales it addresses: what can be said regarding Liverpool-Yemenis may not hold true elsewhere. Further, locally-focused, studies in other cities with a sizeable Yemeni population such as Birmingham, Sheffield, and Cardiff are necessary before any comparative analysis can be made, and a body of such studies would enrich discussion of diaspora and Islam in the UK. Indeed, given that much literature on 'British-Muslims' and British-Muslim identity is rooted in the South-Asian context, this thesis provides an alternative and sometimes

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[29] A striking example of this lack can be found in Uduku's (2003) chapter *Ethnic Minority Perspectives* in *Reinventing the City: Liverpool in Comparative Perspective*, which focuses on Toxteth with reference to the Black, Somali, and Chinese communities, while Yemenis are afforded only a single passing mention (ibid., 130). Indeed, even Frost and Catney's (2019) study on multi-ethnic L8 makes no mention of Yemenis or Arabs.

contrasting view of how such identities are constructed. The following section will now look at the histories of Yemeni migration to Britain before exploring the data available on Yemenis in Liverpool.

3.4.2 The First Wave

The first wave of Yemeni migration to Britain is characterised by Yemeni men being employed aboard ships leaving from Aden to the UK, and subsequently settling in port towns. Migration to the UK began in the late nineteenth century, when 'many Arabs took up employment as stokers and donkeymen on British vessels...and formed communities at places like Liverpool, Manchester, South Shields, Hull, Cardiff and London' (Dahya, 1965: 180). Seddon (2014: 61) notes that 'Lascars' (an earlier term used for sailors coming from Aden and other Eastern ports) have been present in London since the 1780s. Lawless (1995: 10) also gives an account of a sailor having settled in South Shields as early as 1894.

Given Aden's Protectorate status, only Adenis were considered British subjects and hence able to gain employment, but there was nonetheless a large migration to Aden from within Yemen for this same purpose (Lawless, 1995: 32). Yemenis from the Northern highlands were attracted by opportunities for employment and Arab sailors were able to gain employment on British ships from this port. Dresch (2000: 10) reports that in 1890 'half of Aden's population was Arab, mainly from Ḥugariyyah and al-Baydā'. Al-Baydā' will be seen to be an important area of emigration in the following sections.

Lawless (1995: 41) notes that 'the vast majority of Arab seamen at South Shields claimed to have been born at Aden and therefore to be British subjects...In fact very few Arab

seamen were born in Aden'. Dahya (1965: 181), recalling the earlier point that Aden had developed a unique identity, makes a distinction in his article between the 'Adenese' and the 'Yemenis', but he does not state whether the participants themselves made use of such a distinction. Although it is unclear whether 'Adeni' vs. 'Yemeni' was perceived as a meaningful distinction amongst Yemenis at the time, Lawless (1995: 249) notes that the early seafaring migrants would primarily identify themselves with one of the major tribal groupings, i.e. Shamiri, Jubani or Dalali before 'Yemeni'.[30] Demonstrating an apparent distancing from tribal-based identity, Shaif (a Sheffield-Yemeni) says in the published dialogue between himself and Searle (1991: 78) that 'we always saw ourselves and our identity as simply Yemeni. We came from the same country with the same culture and language, the same religion, family structure and attitudes.' This again recalls the point that despite Yemen's political disunity, the social imaginary of a 'single' Yemen is one which finds its origins in Yemen's remote past and continues to be employed in demotic articulations.

Other characteristics of this first wave are that it was exclusively men who settled, many of whom would return to Yemen periodically and thus maintained a 'sojourner mentality'. Many of this first wave of migrants eventually returned to Yemen, although a number also moved elsewhere in the UK during the 1980s due to high unemployment (Halliday, 2010: 135). Those who remained and did not find employment elsewhere are reported to have been living off pensions in houses shared with other men who had presumably lost contact with their families (ibid., 53). Liverpool does not feature prominently in accounts of the first wave of Yemeni immigration.

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[30] The notion of the 'tribe' or *qabīla*, as discussed earlier with reference to genealogy and kinship, will be discussed alongside the ethnographic material in the following chapter.

The characteristics shared between early Yemeni and South Asian migration to the UK are not overlooked by Halliday in a recent addition (2010:134) to his original 1992 study. The 'sojourner mentality' of both groups was present, particularly among the seafaring men who viewed their time in the UK as temporary. Both groups were also initially characterised by their being employed in jobs at the very bottom of the industrial hierarchy (Halliday, 2010: 136). The sojourner mentality appears to have persisted for longer among the seafaring Yemeni men. Although Islam was a uniting feature for Yemenis and South Asians in some respects, Halliday (2010: 137-138) finds that a fissure occurred along ethnic lines, with particular brands of Islam travelling from the village or region of origin. British-Yemenis, nonetheless, were relatively homogeneous in being largely Shāfiʿī, with the charismatic Sufi leader al-Ḥakīmī playing a major role in influencing the development of different forms of Islam in British-Yemeni life (ibid., 138). The role of Yemeni-based Sufism in Liverpool will be examined more closely in Chapter 6.

3.4.3 The Second Wave

The second wave of migration from Yemen occurred during the post-war period when demand for labour in factories was high, especially during the 1950s in the industrial North. This was further motivated by migration to Aden given its position as a booming port-city in the 1950s and as a gateway to employment in Britain (Halliday; 2010: 61). While a form of 'chain migration' linking the first wave to the second would seem likely, it appears that no strong link between the two waves can be established. The earlier seafaring group did not appear to have forged or maintained strong links to the later arrivals of this second wave. Dahya (1965: 180) notes that 'The earlier migrants who spent long periods at sea were denied the fellowship of their migrant countrymen and corporate group life'. In this way, despite the seafaring forebears, it will be seen that it was the

second wave of migration which largely paved the way for future generations of British-Yemenis. A small number of participants did note, however, that either their parents or grandparents had arrived with this first wave, or they had known Yemeni seafaring men who settled in the UK (not necessarily Liverpool at first), the majority of whom have now passed away. Halliday (2010: 61) makes a similar observation, noting that only a small number of the sailors in his study 'forged a link between the two waves of Yemeni emigration', but then later seems to contradict this statement, writing that 'During the Second World War and afterwards they [the Yemeni sailors] began to find employment…they thereby formed the nuclei of the later communities'. Neither Searle (2010) nor Lawless (1995) indicate a strong connection between the two waves, with the majority of those in Searle's study arriving to work in the steelworks in 1950s Sheffield, and those in Lawless' study being seamen who were not followed by a post-War wave of migration. Similarly, as will be discussed, although the memory of the earlier seafaring community forms a part of Liverpool-Yemeni's narratives, the majority arrived in the post-war period, with Liverpool becoming a later destination. Although the earlier seafarers do not form a 'direct' link to Yemenis in the UK today, I wish to highlight that this does not mean they are irrelevant – instead I argue that they form part of the multitude of stories of migration and criss-crossing paths which Yemenis weave into their own articulations of Toxteth as a multi-ethnic locality.

A further motivating factor for the second wave was the passing of the British Nationality Act of 1948 which proposed that 'each unit of the British Commonwealth should have its local nationality law' (Wade, 1948: 67). However as Aden retained colony status until 1967 (and did not subsequently join the Commonwealth), Adeni citizens would have become a citizen of 'the United Kingdom and Colonies' allowing them to work and settle freely until the introduction of the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962 (Searle, 2010:

27). It should be noted, however, that the majority of Yemenis migrating to the UK both pre- and post-war were not Adeni but from the North-Central region. (Searle, 2010: 25; Lawless, 1995: 16-20) and thus had somewhat precarious conditions of migration. The 1962 act effectively banned migration of Commonwealth citizens and citizens of British colonies not currently holding a UK passport to the UK, causing a surge in migration in the years prior, i.e. to 'beat the ban' (ibid.). It has been noted that migration initially comprised exclusively of Yemeni men, and Halliday (2010: 73) exemplifies the extent of this emigration when he writes that there were villages in North Yemen whose remaining male population was only elders and children. Unlike South Asian families, however, Halliday asserts (2010: 132) that Yemeni men did not begin bringing their spouses to Britain until the 1980s. Another important point of consideration is that Aden was at some distance from the colonial centres, being administered via India for most of its colonial history, and having far weaker immediate ties with Britain. Indeed Mawby (2005: 64) notes: 'Since its capture by Haines in 1839, the purpose which Aden served within the British imperial system had been ill-defined. Its future rarely concerned British imperial strategists'. This is in contrast to, for example, Afro-Caribbean migrants, some of whom saw themselves as 'a part of Britain' (Searle, 2010: 28). As the majority of this second wave arrived primarily as employees in heavy industry in the post-War economic boom, only later bringing their families, the conditions of high unemployment and the closure of steelworks from the 1970s onwards meant that many of the steelworkers turned elsewhere for employment.

3.4.4 A Third Wave?

Liverpool has had little mention in the literature concerning both the first and second wave of migration, and only a small number of Yemenis seem to have settled in the city in these

periods – a likely explanation being that Liverpool's decline as a port city in the early twentieth century made it less attractive as a place of settlement for the first wave of seafarers, and high rates of unemployment with no large scale industry such as in Sheffield meant few employment opportunities for those arriving in the post-war period. Halliday (2010: 50-57) does, however, note a possible 'third wave' of mostly UK-internal migration beginning in the 1970s and that 'By the early 1990s, the Liverpool grouping had become one of the largest Yemeni communities in Britain.', with Ansari (2004: 156) also noting that 'By 1992…Liverpool's Yemeni community flourished, and with about 3,500 members was perhaps the largest such settlement in Britain.'

While Yemeni groups in other areas such as South Shields and Sheffield saw a gradual decline in numbers, Liverpool has seen a rapid growth. The main contributing factor for this shift was the closure of the steelworks and other industries, particularly in Sheffield, leading to high levels of unemployment among Yemenis. So much so that the number of Yemenis in Sheffield shrank from an estimated 8,000 in 1972 to 2,000 by 1990 (Searle: 2010: 142). The decrease in numbers of Yemenis in cities such as Sheffield followed by the increase in Liverpool is not a coincidence, however. Looking outside of the ex-industrial towns for employment opportunities, Yemenis were able to find a niche opening in Liverpool – namely, newsagents and corner shops. Elsewhere in the UK, this sector had already been filled by British and South Asians but 'precisely because Liverpool was not an area of large-scale immigration from South Asia and the West Indies the Yemenis were able to find an opening which was less available in other towns.' (Halliday, 2010: 55). While the corner shop owned by a South-Asian family is a familiar trope in many Northern English cities or towns, in Liverpool it is firmly a Yemeni enterprise, although this is beginning to change somewhat. Indeed, the corner shop across from my childhood

home was owned by a Yemeni family, and many Liverpudlians throughout the city know or have known a local Yemeni shopkeeper. It has been reported that there are now around 400 Yemeni owned businesses across the city (The Liverpool Echo, 2008).[31] It is also important to note that although L8 has the largest concentration of Yemenis, Yemeni-owned businesses are found throughout the region in areas such as Anfield, Bootle, Garston, Knotty Ash, and Wavertree.

3.4.5 Arabs in Liverpool: Population Data

Accurate population data for Yemenis in Liverpool (and more generally Arabs in Britain) has proven difficult to obtain for several reasons. Prior to the 2011 Census, there was no option for respondents born in the UK to define their ethnicity as 'Arab', and as such Arabs born in the UK do not appear under any formal grouping before 2011 (Seddon, 2014: 248). It was only after the National Association of British Arabs' lobbying that the category Arab was added (ibid., 251).[32] Ansari (2004: 170) writes regarding the difficulty in estimating the Arab population of the UK that 'The uncertainty about the size of the Arab/Middle Eastern Muslim community in Britain is related to questions about whether they remain "transient"', i.e. the distinction between 'settled' communities such as Yemenis and more recent arrivals whose 'main country of residence and work remains in the Middle East' (ibid.). Nonetheless, it is possible to reach an estimate for Liverpool.

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[31] The Liverpool Echo (author unspecified). 2008. Tribute to newsagent gunned down in Huyton. *The Liverpool Echo*. [Online]. 2 June. Available from: https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/tribute-newsagent-gunned-down-huyton-3482574

[32] Seddon (ibid.) also highlights some discrepancies in the figures between country of birth and ethnicity. This discrepancy can be partially accounted for by people born in Arab countries who do not identify as 'Arab', such as the Kurdish populations as well as individuals choosing 'Other'.

A report on the 2011 Census published online by Liverpool City Council illustrates population by ethnicity, with 'Arab' at 5,629 making up just over 1% of the total population of the city.[33] In addition, data from the 2011 Census provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) via the NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics website notes that there were 2,272 people born in Yemen, and 723 from 'Middle East not otherwise specified' living in the North West in the 2011 census.[34] However this cannot be further specified for regions within the North West. The data for Liverpool specifies only 'Other Middle East', excluding Iran, for country of birth with 4,653 people in this category.[35]

Participants most often stated figures between 7,000 and 10,000 for the Yemeni population in Liverpool, but according to the above data it would seem that there are significantly fewer. Assuming that the 5,629 people listed as 'Arab' in the 2011 Census are not all Yemeni, and also taking into account that a number of Liverpool-Yemenis may have responded as 'Other' or 'Mixed Other', a reasonable estimate would likely be around 5,000. A number of those listed as 'Arab' may also be refugees from countries such as Iraq and Syria having arrived more recently, nonetheless these did not seem to form any large or coherent group during the fieldwork period.

[33] Liverpool City Council. 2015. *2011 Census: Liverpool Summary*. [Online]. Available from: https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/9900/full-report.pdf
[34] Office for National Statistics. 2011. *NOMIS QS213EW dataset*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/QS213EW/view/2013265922?cols=measures
[35] Office for National Statistics. 2011. *NOMIS QS203EW dataset*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/QS203EW/view/1946157104?rows=cell&cols=rural_urban

Table 1: Collated population data for ethnicity and country of birth in Liverpool/North West.

Category	Region	Number	Source
Ethnicity: Arab	Liverpool	5,629	LCC Census Report
Ethnicity: Mixed	Liverpool	11,756	LCC Census Report
Ethnicity: Other	Liverpool	2,648	LCC Census Report
Country of Birth: Other Mid. East	Liverpool	4,653	ONS NOMIS Dataset
Country of Birth: Yemen	North West	2,272	ONS NOMIS Dataset

The Liverpool City Council website also provides ward profiles which are broken down by ethnicity and other categories according to the 2011 Census.[36] According to these, the wards in and surrounding Toxteth which include Princes Park, Picton, Central and Riverside account for the majority of Liverpool's Arab population:

Ward	Arab Total
Princes Park	1,335
Picton	1,003
Central	710
Riverside	468
Greenbank	259
Kensington & Fairfield	258
Tuebrook & Stoneycroft	190
Everton	153
St Michaels	145
Old Swan	114
Wavertree	96
Kirkdale	86
Anfield	83
Woolton	78
Mossley Hill	72
Church	66
Speke Garston	56
Warbreck	55
Total	**5,227**

The remaining wards each have less than fifty people listed with 'Arab' ethnicity. Lodge Lane, often considered the Yemeni 'hub', is within Princes Park ward. Notably, however,

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[36] https://liverpool.gov.uk/council/key-statistics-and-data/census/ward-census-summaries/

outside of these areas the Arab population is quite evenly dispersed throughout the city with each ward having between approximately 200-300 people listed as 'Arab'. This agrees with Halliday's (1992) observation that Yemenis settled throughout the city, which was also later confirmed by participants as a number live or lived outside of L8. Additionally, some participants noted that increased social mobility has led to a number of families moving to more middle-class suburbs such as those in St Michaels, Greenbank, and Woolton wards. While the number of Arabs in Princes Park ward is small in absolute terms at 1,335, it is proportionally significant as this accounts for 7.8% of the total Princes Park population indicating a relatively high density of Arabs in the area.[37] Furthermore, 4,444 in Princes Park ward are listed as being born in a non-EU country which accounts for 26% of the total ward population. Additionally, according to Liverpool City Council's 'Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015' report (2015: 7), Princes Park ward in L8 (the area of the city with the highest number of 'Arabs') is within the 1% most deprived nationally, with Liverpool itself being the 'fifth most income deprived district in England' (ibid., 14).[38] In summary, this data reveals a smaller number of Arabs in the city than is commonly thought, but Toxteth nonetheless remains ethnically diverse and in line with my own and participants' observations it is also the area with the highest concentration of Arabs.

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[37] Similarly, the number of those listed as 'Black' in Princes Park ward is 2,751 representing 16.1% of the population which accords with this area being most closely associated with Liverpool-born Blacks. There are also 1,702 (or 10%) listed as 'Mixed'. Those listed as Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi in Princes Park total 580, or 189, 217, 174 respectively. This also confirms that the area has a higher population of 'Arabs' in comparison to these groups. The total of those listed as 'White' accounts for 53% of Princes Park's population.

[38] Liverpool City Council. 2015. *The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015: A Liverpool analysis.* [Online]. Available from: https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/10003/2-imd-2015-main-report-final.pdf

3.4.6 Radā' and Malāḥ in Liverpool

Although a full survey of region of origin within Yemen for the entirety of the Liverpool-Yemeni population would not have been feasible, the majority of participants noted that they or their families come from one particular region in Yemen. They also perceived this region as accounting for most of Liverpool-Yemenis' region of origin. This region is Radā' (sometimes alternatively romanised as Rada'a), in al-Bayḍā Governorate in the Central Region of Yemen. Participants further specified the village of Malāḥ in al-'Arsh district, a few kilometres from the city of Radā'. Indeed, one author with whom I corresponded noted that she had met several Liverpool-Yemenis in Radā' during the 1980s. A smaller number reported other regions of origin with the Central Region, such as Damt. This is in contrast to Lawless' (1995) Searle's (2010) and studies who note Ibb and Ta'izz as the main regions of origin for Yemenis in Sheffield and South Shields. Radā' is located in the Western half of al-Bayḍā Governorate as Figure 2 below shows.

Figure 2: Location of Radā' in al-Bayḍā Governorate. *Google Maps, 2020.*[39]

The district of al-'Arsh in which Malāḥ is located, and the neighbouring Riyāshiyya

district have also been a source of emigration to the United States (New York especially,

but also Detroit), and according to one 1980 census forty-six percent of the total male

population of Radā' were emigrants (Staub, 1989: 78 citing Steffens, 1979: 108). This is

an important point since one pervasive characteristic of diaspora is 'awareness of co-

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[39] Google Maps, 2020. *Al-Bayḍā Governorate, Yemen*. Map Data: Google. [Online] Available from: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Al+Bayda'+Governorate,+Yemen Reproduced in accordance with Google Terms of Service.

ethnics elsewhere' – even more so when Yemenis in both Liverpool and New York share a point of origin in a cluster of villages/towns in and around Radā'. As was mentioned, in the late nineteenth century al-Baydā' experienced significant emigration to Aden (Dresch, 2000: 10) and has continued to be one of Yemen's main regions of emigration. Birks, Sinclair and Socknat (1981, 57: Table 5) note that out of all Yemeni regions al-Baydā' had the highest rate of emigration in 1974, with an emigration rate of 11.4% of the male population. Not only is the outward flow of migration significant, but the impact of emigration and diaspora groups on the 'homeland' also accentuates how such processes impact the 'here' and the 'there' as they become implicated in the translocal flow of remittances, goods, ideas, and people. Yemen has been particularly shaped by its long history of emigration, with the consequence that remittances from its diaspora groups now form an important part of the region's economy, as Fergany (1982: 760) notes that from the 1970s onwards, 'It [emigration] grew to dominate the economy and the very essence of life in the country'.

While Radā' is located more or less in the centre of present-day Yemen in purely geographical terms, during the period of the two Yemeni states, Radā' and al-Bayḍā Governorate as a whole were both situated within the borders of the (North) Yemen Arab Republic, although al-Baydā' town, the capital of al-Baydā' Governorate, lay just on the border between the two Yemeni states (Dresch, 2000: 139; Dresch, 1989: 23). Radā' is located at the approximate boundary between Upper and Lower Yemen (or the Northern and Southern Highland regions respectively) on the eastern edge of the Eastern Highland Plateau (Dresch, 1989:4). This intermediate area has given rise to what has been termed loosely as the 'Central Areas', or, *al-Minṭaqa al-Wusṭā* (Dresch: 1989: 14). Therefore, in relation to the previously discussed North/South divide, Radā' is 'Northern', but only

marginally so as the fuzzy boundary of the Central Areas was reflected in interviews when participants from Radā' were asked whether they considered themselves as being from Upper or Lower Yemen, with the most common response being 'somewhere around the middle'. Dresch (1989: 14) also illustrates the ambiguous position the region around Radā' occupies, stating: 'The areas directly south of San'a and Dhamar…are readily assimilated to Upper Yemen by southerners, and to Lower Yemen by northerners', in other words Radā' may be seen as Northern by Southerners, and Southern by Northerners.

Also attesting to Radā's intermediate position within Yemen is its ambiguous Zaydi/Sunni split in not having a clear Zaydi majority in comparison to 'truly' Northern areas such as Ṣa'dah, Amrān, and Ṣan'a. Halliday (2010: 11) highlights that 'The Yemenis themselves refer to the Shafei areas of the North, quite accurately, as "the middle region"'. Dresch (2000: 242) gives a contrasting view indicating a prevalence of Zaydism in Radā', thus exemplifying the ambiguous nature of the region in terms of the Sunni/Zaydi split.

Disputes concerning the exact nature of the Sunni/Zaydi split in the Central Regions notwithstanding, this section has highlighted the region's particular context characterised by its ambiguous position within Yemen's North/South axes of divide. Chapter 6 explores how the religious landscape of Yemen complete with the ambivalences and ambiguities of the Central Areas has 'travelled' to the Liverpool context.

3.5 Conclusion

Having contextualised Liverpool, salient aspects of the national Yemeni context and areas of emigration, and Yemeni migration to Britain, the following chapters build upon this context to produce a rich ethnographic account which is structured loosely around the key

concepts of multicultural triangle in Liverpool-Yemeni life: ethnicity, nation and (trans)locality, and travelling Islam. This chapter has paid particular attention to the literature on Scouse identities which reveal their construction as oppositional within the social imaginary of Liverpool, and Yemeni identities which variously invoke a semi-mythologised Yemeni past into the present against the highly contested national politics of 'unified' Yemen. It also identified a unique Adeni identity which, as a once prosperous port city, shares some similarities with Liverpool. The chapter has also aimed to demonstrate that emigration from Yemen is not a new phenomenon, but one which has a long history giving rise to networks across the Indian Ocean and beyond. In this way, Yemeni migration to the UK is not seen as an isolated event; instead, emigration from (and migration to) Yemen is better understood as an intrinsic dynamic in Yemen's history. Alexander, Chatterji and Jalais write:

> Contemporary patterns of migration and settlement, citizenship and exclusion, status and discrimination can best be understood by grasping the historical connections between places of origin and places of arrival and the influence of political and social structures at both 'ends' of the migration process, as well as the complex mix of resources, cultures, and identities of the migrants themselves. (2015: 3)

It is perhaps clear by this point that the thesis takes a similar perspective, albeit limited by the fact that a multi-sited approach was not possible. Nonetheless, it would be impossible to fully grasp the various dynamics of Liverpool-Yemeni life without reference to the context and connections from the 'Yemeni side' of migration. The historicisation of migration in both the Liverpool and Yemeni contexts has also reinforced the concept of the glocal: although both regions have been shaped, sometimes dramatically, by cross-border flows (and conflitcs) throughout the past centuries, the very localised histories and dynamics of Toxteth and Radā' are equally as important as wider-scale analyses. A third

wave of UK-internal Yemeni migration to Liverpool has been discussed, highlighting a set of histories and circumstances which allowed a flourishing of Liverpool-Yemeni business. Having established the context of 'here' and 'there', Part Two of the thesis will now explore Liverpool-Yemenis' multiple positioned belongings across three ethnographic chapters.

Chapter 4:   (Re)constructing Yemeniness in Liverpool

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question: 'How, when, and to what extent do Liverpool-Yemenis construct, maintain, and negotiate a Yemeni identity?'. In terms of scale, this chapter is focused primarily on the family network and the local neighbourhood (i.e. Toxteth/L8). The main argument running throughout this chapter is that the second-generation experience strong translocal connections, albeit decreasingly so with the current conflict, primarily through the translocal family network. This is where Yemeni identities are most clearly constructed and performed, and the context in which they retain salience. Nonetheless, this chapter also reveals that these identities remain largely 'encapsulated', rarely being employed as 'ethnicised' in a fetishised fashion, but existing alongside hybridised Scouse-Yemeni identities which are foregrounded in other contexts which extend beyond the family network.

Moving away from 'institutional writing' which typically emerges from a focus on 'sites of governance and mass media communication' thereby prioritising 'influential or authoritative narratives' (McLoughlin, 2014: 2), the everyday Liverpool-Yemeni 'diasporic tension' arising from attachments to roots 'there' in Yemen and routes 'here' in Liverpool is highlighted throughout this chapter to reveal a world which exists largely beyond the gaze of institutions. This tension gives rise to multiple private and public performances of identity which are each contextually and relationally situated. These multiple positioned identities can be configured along the lines of the ethnicisation, hybridisation, and 'religionisation' of identity, which variously coalesce and compete according to their situated and contextual nature. The chapter also demonstrates that

ethnicised Yemeni identities are not reproductions of an uncontested, essentialised 'Yemeniness' – elements of Yemeni kinship and social hierarchy become contested in the diaspora, and Yemeni identities are re-configured in relation to Liverpool/Toxteth as a locality through processes of everyday 'organic' hybridisation (Bakhtin, 1981; Werbner, 2001).

Chapter 1 outlined the difficulties in delineating 'ethnicity' as a concept, and indeed whether it can be delineated at all. Nonetheless, it will be useful to restate the approach taken in this chapter. As the research question highlights, this chapter does not presuppose the existence of a single homogeneous Yemeni ethnicity or community, rather, in Aly's (2015: 1) words: 'Arabness, like all other categorical labels is best understood not as a form of authentic "being" but as repertoires of "doing".' Such an understanding underlines that ethnicity is always relational, contextual, performative, embodied and materialised – it is always in the process of becoming, however reified and static individuals may perceive it as being. I also make the distinction between ethno-cultural/national and *ethnicised* Yemeni identities to highlight that while Liverpool-Yemenis may (re)create an (ethno-)cultural Yemeni identity in certain contexts, these do not always take place as a form of boundary-making vis-à-vis wider society. Similarly, the Appadurian approach views locality as 'primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial' (Appadurai, 1996: 178) – neighbourhoods and localities are thus both 'contexts' in themselves, and simultaneously 'context-producing'. While both of these notions leave 'ethnicity' and 'locality' in open-ended processes, this does not mean that they exist only as theoretical concepts. Any study which takes ethnicity or locality as its primary subjects presupposes that processes behind them can, in some way, be observed in the social world. This dialogical approaches recognises that such (etic) theorisations and abstractions exist

not only in dialogue with the scholarly literature, but are also informed by and in dialogue

with the participants' (emic) understandings and experiences of them. As Werbner (2002a:

8) states, both the etic and emic perspectives 'are unfinished arguments debated from

different vantage points within two relatively autonomous epistemic fields of discourse'.

While the etic and emic stem from different concerns and perspectives: one scholarly and

highly theorised, the other everyday and lived, this does not mean they are mutually

exclusive. Indeed, a dialogical approach gives space to the idea that emic understandings

of (ethnic) identity, often perceived as fixed and solid, must come before an etic

understanding – while discussions of hybridisation, fluidity, and processes of

(re)construction occupy much of the literature (and indeed this thesis), providing important

vantage points, they nonetheless arise out of 'dialogue' with the empirical data in which

emic perspectives might contrast sharply with such notions.

4.2 The Translocal Family

This chapter primarily looks at constructions and performances of Yemeni identities from

the perspective of *second-generation* Liverpool-Yemenis who make up the majority of

participants in this study.[40] This presents a fresh and contemporary contribution to the

literature on Yemenis in the UK, most of which has focused only on earlier Yemeni-born

generations, and thereby explores the changing dynamics of a diaspora in the post-

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[40] I use 'second generation' to refer to participants born in Liverpool/the UK to Yemeni-born parents. All second-generation participants are between the ages of twenty and fifty. As Yemeni settlement in Liverpool occurred primarily following the decline of industry in cities such as Sheffield, Birmingham, and Warrington, it is unsurprising that none of the participants had parents born in Liverpool. Participants overwhelmingly gave accounts of their parents' arrival in Liverpool which closely followed Halliday's (2010: 55) observation of relocation to Liverpool from the industrial areas and subsequently 'setting up shop'. Only Sheffield, Birmingham, and Warrington were noted as previous areas of residence/employment, with no participants mentioning arrival to Liverpool from areas such as Cardiff or South Shields.

migration period as its second generation enter adulthood. That Yemeni identities are primarily constructed and performed in/via family networks is not unusual – the family is, after all, one of the most enduring social institutions and one through which we gain many of our formative experiences. It is also the location of many 'everyday' interactions, including transnational/local practices which this thesis emphasises.

Instead of assuming a linear progression from migration to settlement and loss of attachment to the homeland, the notion of 'transnational/translocal families' or translocal lives is useful for the following sections (see Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002; Rubel and Rosman, 2009; Madianou and Miller, 2012, for further examples of a 'translocal/national family' perspective). Such a notion highlights that modern travel capabilities and communication technologies allow real attachments across borders to persist, blurring the line between where one locality ends and the other begins. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 4) make the point that 'Migration and diaspora studies provide valuable insights into transnational families vis-à-vis national borders as well as the positions of individuals and minorities within states'. Thus a focus on the (everyday) family provides an alternative viewpoint to discussions which rely primarily on institutional representations or narratives (cf. McLoughlin, 2014). From an institutional perspective, it would be difficult to identify specific performances or constructions of Yemeni identity in Liverpool. Indeed, authors such as Halliday (2010: 131) assert that Yemenis are 'Britain's invisible Arabs' precisely due to the lack of any major national/regional 'official' representation. Of course, construing Yemenis and Yemeniness as invisible is a question of position and scale – the following sections will demonstrate that Yemeniness continues to be performed and (re)created within the private sphere of family networks, while simultaneously becoming hybridised alongside notions of Liverpool/Toxteth which operate as an 'elaborate signifier'

of locality (Brown, 2005: 130-131). Nonetheless, McLoughlin (2014: 3) also highlights that an everyday, demotic perspective must also 'not lose sight of multi-local connections elsewhere as a property of all dwelling spaces'.

Many participants noted uncertainty over whether they were first, second, or third generation as the pattern of migration and settlement was often not linear, and with their parents' or themselves having extended stays in Yemen. Only one Yemeni participant had a UK-born parent – her father, who I was also able to interview, although notably her grandfather had previously settled in Britain as part of the early seafaring wave of Yemeni migrants and moved to Liverpool in the 1970s where he set up a corner shop. This participant herself was born in Yemen, moving to Liverpool at a young age. Her family's story of migration is particularly colourful as the multi-generational journey included residence/employment/settlement in Madagascar, France, Sheffield, and ultimately Liverpool, continuously interspersed with periods of stay in Yemen. This particular story of migration itself begins to reveal the multi-generational, multi-local journeys and lives which many participants articulated and which problematises a neat categorisation of first/second/further generations. Her father, Maḥmūd (40s, born in another North West town, moved to L8 as a child, self-employed), noted that he moved to Yemen around the age of ten, where he then spent several years, spending a further stay in Yemen during his twenties when he married. Similarly, Ṭāriq (40s, born in Merseyside, various employment including community work) noted that he moved to Yemen around the age of eight or nine, returning to Liverpool to begin secondary school by which point he 'could barely speak English'. Zahra (20s, born in Liverpool, student) notably also mentioned that her father and grandfather moved directly to Liverpool from al-Ḍhāli' Governorate when her

father was a child.[41] Also, several participants born in Liverpool had Yemeni-born spouses. In addition, all Yemeni participants had travelled to Yemen at least once, often on a semi-regular basis, although generally for shorter periods of duration than Ṭāriq and Maḥmūd. One memorable trip was described by Rīm (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment): her father had arranged a trip to Yemen in the 1990s for the extended family in which they drove the entirety of the route in a mini-bus, crossing through Europe, into Syria and Saudi Arabia until reaching Yemen where they stayed for three months. Regular contact with family members in Yemen was also discussed by most participants, for example Zahra noted that she would regularly speak to her grandmother in Yemen via telephone or internet.

These translocal circulations of people and family networks are not only visible in Liverpool, but can also be seen at 'the other end' of the migration chain in Yemeni towns which have seen migration to Liverpool. Rīm illustrates how Liverpool is also present in her family's village. Using typical Liverpudlian colloquialisms, she describes how it was common to see people wearing 'trainees' (trainer shoes) donated by Liverpool-Yemeni families, as well as support for Liverpool Football Club (LFC). The sending of regular remittances to family members in Yemen was similarly reported by most participants.[42] Nāṣir (50s, born in Yemen, community leader) also mentioned that he knew of Liverpool

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[41] While the data on specific patterns of migration is limited to the accounts given by participants and available city demographics, Zahra's account indicates an additional, albeit smaller, element of Yemeni migration to Liverpool which has been little discussed. In this case, it appears a smaller number of families from the 1970s onwards arrived directly from Yemen to Liverpool, not having previously been employed in the industrial cities. This was also further partially confirmed at other events such as a Yemeni wedding in which several men mentioned that they had come directly to Liverpool.

[42] Only Maḥmūd noted that he did not send remittances, as his family had either all moved to Liverpool, or those in Yemen had now passed away. Although the sending of remittances now extends to recipients beyond the family for some second-generation participants.

before moving to the city in the late 1980s due to widespread support for LFC in his town, as well as knowing Yemenis who had worked or had family in Liverpool.

Despite some differences in the particular routes of migration of their forebears, second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis overwhelmingly share first-hand experiences of 'Yemeni life', or as was commonly articulated, 'village life' in Malāḥ and its environs. McLoughlin (2010: 225) writes that for many born 'in the diaspora', the valency of homeland attachment may lessen, leading to new forms of belonging, such as those centred around religion. However, for second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis, frequent travel to the 'homeland', sometimes for long periods, reinforces the presence of Yemen in Liverpool. This translocal presence is further reinforced by those arriving directly from Yemen, either seeking employment or, as was predominantly represented in the sample, as spouses of those born in Liverpool, presenting a continual cross-border flow of people. These flows strengthen the construction of an ethno-cultural identity 'rooted' in the homeland, but it will be seen that it is often specific localities within Yemen, such as Malāḥ, which take precedence in these constructions and performances.

Maḥmūd (40s, born in the North West, moved to L8 at a young age, various employment) further highlights the importance simply being 'in' a specific Yemeni locality in providing a physical link to family histories:

> The name of the local city is Radā'. So, what I found out was, whenever there would be a burial in the village, people would ask about the graves that were around, the graveyards, so I was asking the same questions too. *I wanted to know where my grandfathers and grandmothers were actually buried in Yemen* and people pointed out to me where they were... all in the same place, like you had grandfathers and grandmothers, their sisters too, whether the grandfather had brothers, things like that.

Rīm also highlights that 'Arabic culture' was predominantly experienced within the family:

> Our only Arabic [language] and culture *was only at home or when family come to visit*, or if we met up [with family], we still knew who we were and what we were.

Hayfā (30s, born in Liverpool, social worker) has visited Yemen several times. She notably does not express her experiences in terms of 'difference', but rather emphasises the close-knit nature of the village:

> I think when going to the village, that was an experience because in Yemen the village is very secluded and everybody knows everything, but because we're from Liverpool we don't really get that sense of community [here in Liverpool], but when I was there it was like people coming round to visit every day and it was like you were on a pedestal and everyone was watching you. That was an experience, because I'd never seen that before...They were fine [regarding my identity as a British-Yemeni] but it's just language is a big part, because I wasn't, like, fully fluent and sometimes I could speak and but sometimes I couldn't understand bits, so that was a bit hard *but when I was in Yemen I always felt welcomed*. Where it's different when you're here.

Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) also noted that growing up, she and her family would visit Yemen every two years with further visits as an adult until the war broke out in 2015. She also notes that growing up in a largely white neighbourhood of Toxteth in comparison to other areas of L8 with a higher concentration of Yemenis, her contact with other Yemenis was primarily through the family.

In several visits to participants' homes, the presence of Yemen was also notable in the furnishings such as low-seated sofas with ornately-decorated cushions, delicate sets of Arab coffee/tea cups (*finjān*), an oud (a stringed instrument) hung on the wall, and photographs or objects depicting Yemen's landscape. I was also informed that the very

distinct Yemeni-style coffee and *bukhūr* (incense wood chips) could be purchased on Lodge Lane, among other Yemeni/Arab objects. The living room or *dīwān* was also highlighted in several interviews as an important space of sociality, particularly for men as Aḥmad, Rīm, and Zamīla noted that it would be common for their fathers' relatives and friends to gather on a weekend in the living room where they would discuss Yemeni affairs.

Rīm (30s, born in Liverpool, social worker, family owns newsagents) also highlights the importance of such spaces for women's socialisation via the family network, as well as further connections in the US:

> There were two aunties, you know, the Arab women's get togethers for coffee and tea and dances and that, and we'd only go to those two houses and there'd be all these other Arabs there. And that's where we met them, but we didn't hold them kind of things [in our house]. […]
> Yeah, or like, we had family in America and they'd visit every year. You need to visit America, I felt like it was *Bāb al-Yaman*, the market and that, it's just like Yemen, the men are strict with religion.[43]

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[43] *Bāb al-Yaman*, literally 'the Gate of Yemen', refers to the large entrance in the old walls of Ṣanʻā.

Figure 3: Photograph of objects from a Yemeni home. *David Harrison, 2018.*

While the translocal flow of objects between Liverpool and various localities within

Yemen does not occur on any great scale given the small population size, it is nonetheless

significant. The importance of material objects and materiality in studies of diaspora and

migration has been recognised by scholars such as Crang (2010), Werbner (2011), and

Turan (2004, 2010). Crang (2010: 139) writes that 'diasporic identities and processes are

forged through the production, circulation and consumption of material things and spaces'.

In a study of the Palestinian diaspora, Turan (2010: 45) found that objects were important

in providing 'shared connections to the pre-migratory landscapes with post-migratory memories', while also making a distinction between the role of objects in public and private constructions/performances of identity. The flows of goods and Yemeni objects present in Liverpool are, however, largely limited to domestic spaces and the Yemeni 'hub' of Lodge Lane rather than representing forms of 'intellectual high culture'. Nonetheless, this does not mean they are less important. Zahra (20s, born in Liverpool, student) notably mentioned during an interview that she consciously chooses to wear distinctively Yemeni clothing, such as scarves and wristbands to publicly emphasise her 'Yemeniness' in the face of intra-Arab stereotyping of Yemenis. Indeed, Werbner (2011: 471) makes the point that all of 'intellectual creativity, diasporic quotidian popular culture, subjective consciousness and political action' are mutually-constitutive of diaspora. In this way, the role of these objects can be understood as part of 'diasporic homemaking' – 'They help to constitute a diasporic home that complicates and enriches sense of residential location' (Crang, 2010: 142). Thus the presence of these objects and how spaces are demarcated as specific areas of (Arab) sociality contributes to the construction of a Yemeni diasporic aesthetic which is largely hidden from public view. However, 'recreating' Yemen in this sense is not only a 'reproduction', but 'It emerges from dialogical forging in the here and now, of shared canons of taste among diasporic producers and consumers who collectively define what makes for social distinction' (Werbner and Fumanti, 2012: 150).

The above highlights that seen through the lens of (translocal) family networks, Liverpool-Yemenis' relationship to Yemen is in many ways still deeply diasporic, continually reinforced by these transnational/local flows. However, the current crisis and its impact on travel was also a key point in many interviews as it has greatly disrupted these translocal flows. Participants also pointed out that Yemenis in Britain did not arrive as refugees, and

nobody knew of any Yemeni refugees in Liverpool fleeing the current crisis. The inability to travel to Yemen since at least 2015 was also discussed, with some participants such as Munīra lamenting that the younger generations have not had the chance to experience Yemeni life, articulating worries that this will lead to a loss of Yemeni identity in the city.

While this deeply diasporic aspect of Liverpool-Yemeni life was articulated through interviews and observable at events such as the wedding (see section 4.3), there also exists a tension which problematises discussion of a coherent or unified 'Yemeni diaspora' in Liverpool. The following quotes illustrate the primacy of the family for participants when narrating their relation to other Liverpool-Yemenis.

For example, both Rīm and Zamīla (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment including shop work) noted that although events were occasionally organised for 'the community', such as day-trips to Wales, these often ended up being 'groups of families going off and doing their own thing'. Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) also noted that it was not until she had finished secondary school that she began to form connections with Yemenis outside the family. For Munīra, these connections were not mediated by any imagined Yemeni 'community', articulating that although she feels a strong connection to Yemen, she enjoys a diverse circle of friends and acquaintances. To illustrate the importance of the family in creating and maintaining intra-Yemeni connections, she says:

> There is lots of connections in the Malāḥī community, so if I ask my mum: "Who's that lady?", she'll say: "Her aunt's uncle is your dad's this", *so it's like these threads that bind the community*, and they're quite strong those threads. You don't have to be sister or brother, but if there's one small link that's literally enough for them to be family.

Similarly, Aḥmad speaking on the changing demographics of Liverpool's Arab populations also spoke in terms of ties between extended families and the central role of the *dīwān* as a (masculine) social space:

> You had less diversity of Arabs back then [1980s-1990s], it was very Yemeni heavy, now you've got some more from the Levant and Libya but then it was very Yemeni, but I've seen a lot of change. When I was younger the number of Yemenis was like, *certain families*, you'd know them all, and my father was involved in a Yemeni community centre in different positions as an elder, and he had one of the biggest living rooms, or *diwān*, so every Saturday they'd sit and do Yemeni stuff and chat about all the issues, but literally in our shop when someone went past we'd go "Are they Yemeni? Do you think they're Yemeni?" but now it's more like "Are they Arabic?" so it's been a lot of...diversified...

Most participants echoed similar views in that although they were aware of a wider Yemeni presence in Liverpool, the primary social networks tended to be structured around the extended family rather than perceiving themselves as part of a wider 'community'. Also to contrast these views from an Arab but non-Yemeni perspective, Dālyā (30s, born in Liverpool, artist) noted that despite their sharing a common Arabic language, she had come into little contact with Liverpool-Yemenis who she perceived as being 'closed off' and 'conservative', highlighting that broader labels such as 'Arab' must also be understood as contextual – in this case holding less significance at the scale of family networks. The above seemingly agrees with Bruneau's (2010: 43) point that for transnational migrants (or 'transmigrants'), as compared to diasporans, 'The family structure, more than the village community of origin, is essential in explaining the cohesion of these networks.' However, by using a multi-scalar approach I also contend that Liverpool-Yemenis are diasporans in the sense that they maintain awareness of people and places elsewhere, e.g. through the translocal family connections to Yemen and the USA, and thus cannot be described merely as 'transmigrants'. In addition, a focus on the everyday and the 'hidden' demotic

discourses reveals a more complex picture of diasporic tensions and multiple belongings which cannot be neatly contained within any single diaspora. While performances of Yemeni identities in Liverpool may remain encapsulated in the family network, this is not to say that second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis are themselves 'encapsulated' or limited to these networks. In this way, the tension of 'roots' and 'routes' can be more clearly seen. Munīra and Aḥmad themselves articulated being conscious of this tension during childhood, noting that growing up they thought of themselves as 'White' or 'Scouse' in some contexts, such as during their school years, and as 'Arab' at home and in Arab spaces.

4.3 Performing Yemeniness: A Liverpool-Yemeni Wedding

The notion of performativity is perhaps now most associated with the works of Judith Butler (1988, 1993, 2006) which address the performance of gender; however, the concept is also useful when examining ethnicity. Butler (1993: 3) writes that 'performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act," but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names'. In this sense, speech and embodied communicative acts are performative in so much as their repetition produces subjectivity. Valkonen (2014: 212) in her study on the construction of Sámi ethnicity draws upon performativity theory to highlight that through this understanding of performative acts, 'Attaining subjectivity ensures the position of agency and socially recognized existence'. Or, as Werbner (2002a: 11) notes, 'These [diasporic identities] can only be achieved through 'doing' or, more broadly, through *performance'.* In a way similar to gender, but not completely analogous, ethnic/cultural identities are also produced through embodied performances of 'doing' (Butler, 2006: xvi). Additionally, ethno-cultural identities are not constructed and performed as stand-alone phenomena, but

are also be embedded in other matrices – Butler herself recognises this when she (2006: 4)

says that 'gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical

contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional

modalities of discursively constituted identities'. Thus this section also pays attention to

how such spaces as the wedding can be read as producing intersecting masculine Yemeni

subjectivities. Given that the thesis has emphasised 'becoming' over 'being', the idea that

identity (be it ethnic, gender, sexual, etc.) is performed as part of this dynamic process is

fundamental.

The following draws upon observations at a Liverpool-Yemeni wedding which I was

invited to attend in February 2018 by Maḥmūd. I was also able to watch several other

Liverpool-Yemeni weddings via online livestreaming which confirmed that the structure

and content of this wedding was largely typical of Liverpool-Yemeni weddings. Central to

both the performance of Yemeniness during the wedding and also implicated in Yemeni

kinship/social hierarchies discussed in the section below is the notion of *qabīla*.[44] Indeed,

the wedding itself can be read partly as a performance of *qabīla* and by extension

Arab/Yemeni masculinity. Eid (2007: 122) notes that 'families of the Arab diaspora often

find in traditional gender relations a cultural buffer delineating symbolic boundaries

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[44] The Arabic term, *qabīla* (pl. *qabā'il)*, is often translated as 'tribe' but I have preferred to use the Arabic term throughout this section. It is important to note that 'tribe' here should not be understood in the earlier anthropological sense with its (now much criticised) preoccupation with 'remote/primitive tribal society', but rather as an important part of societal organisation in parts of the Arab world, particularly within the Arabian Peninsula. For this reason, I use *qabīla* over 'tribe' to underline that the *qabīla* as seen through Arab history is a specific construct, operating within specific Arab contexts. The tribal-urban (*qabīlī-ḍa'īf*) division within Arab society has been long noted, especially so in Yemen, as Weir (2007: 2) notes 'Much of Yemen is divided into mostly sedentary tribes, and has been since antiquity; the only major region which seems never to have been tribally organised surrounds the towns of Ibb and Ta'izz in "Lower Yemen".' Another important division within Arab society which has long been recognised is that of nomadic peoples (*badū*) versus settled peoples (*ḥaḍar*) (Dresch, 1989: 6-7). However, the *qabīla* is not only a bedouin phenomenon, but also occurs in some settled regions, such as Yemen with its long history of organised agriculture (Weir, 2007: 2; Dresch, 1989: 6-7). For purposes of the following discussion, I have taken Weir's (ibid.) loose definition of *qabīla* as 'territorial polities whose members share a common allegiance'.

between Us and Them'. While this thesis is not an examination of masculinity *per se*,
gender norms in Yemeni/Muslim society (partially) reproduced in Liverpool mean that in
some circumstances, such as the wedding which has a separate male and female
celebration, my observations were limited to a 'masculine' perspective.[45] It will first be
worthwhile exploring Maḥmūd's articulations on the 'bedouin ideal' of (masculine)
'Arabness' during an interview some time before the wedding:

> I think there's lots of divisions [between the various Arab groups], you know, Arabs rely
> heavily on bedouin values and also on Islamic values too, and I think that sometimes bedouin
> values can actually clash with the religious values, right, sometimes they can be compatible,
> but often they clash too…Some of the traits of bedouin values among the Arab people may be
> similar among any other people in any other parts of the world, but some of the bedouin
> values of the Arabs are based on *pride, and revenge, and aggression* also, and unfortunately
> self-centredness…
>
> […]
>
> '…[if] I want to put myself in a mental state where I can become Arabian outwardly to others,
> how would I begin that? What would I do to be more Arabian? *I may have to include bedouin
> traits, being more diversely friendly*…I would have to have that outward attitude of being
> cosmopolitan within the Arab community at large.

This discussion can be read as a communicative performance of (masculine) Arabness,
which for Maḥmūd is centred around adopting and integrating the 'bedouin values' which
he views as positive into his everyday life. Indeed, the notion of hospitality
(cosmpolitanness or being 'more diversely friendly' in Maḥmūd's words, *karāmah* in
Arabic) was also emphasised in Maḥmūd's invitation to the wedding, stating that it was an
open, 'city-wide' invitation.[46] The notion of 'demotic cosmopolitans' will be discussed

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[45] This being the case, the discussion of the wedding should be understood in terms of performance of
gendered (masculine) Yemeniness. Performances of Yemeniness in similar contexts from women's
perspectives would greatly add to the literature on British-Yemenis and provide a counterpoint to this
study.

[46] However, I appeared to be the only non-Arab present at the wedding.

further in the following chapter. While Maḥmūd's own narration of bedouin ideals appears to draw upon an imaginary which is not only Yemeni, but more broadly related to Arab notions of masculinity, the wedding allowed a clearer view into how Yemeniness (or Malāḥiness) is performed within the context of the family network, and how forms of *qabīlī* masculinity are (re)produced. It will first be useful to note that Radā', Malāḥ and the surrounding regions which account for the majority of the participants' region of origin within Yemen are located within Yemeni 'tribal territory' which Dresch (1989: 8) elaborates upon, noting: 'the tribes occupy the poorer, semi-arid part of the country toward the north and east'. Thus it will be seen that the wedding is perhaps more accurately described as a Liverpool-*Malāḥi* wedding, underlining the importance of the local rather than the nation in this interdomestic sphere (see Werbner, 1990, who discusses the role of the interdomestic sphere in British-Pakistani life).

This section is not intended to demonstrate some sort of essentialist '*qabīlī* nature' of Liverpool-Yemenis, but rather highlights how (translocal) 'roots' in the *qabīlī* areas of Malāḥ and surrounding regions play a role in constructions and performances of (masculine) Yemeni identities.[47] It will be seen in this and the following section, however, that the *qabīla* and Yemeni social hierarchies are both (re)produced, performed, and contested. In this instance, the wedding is read as an encapsulated performance of Yemeni masculinity rooted in a specific locality in Yemen rather. That is to say, its performance takes place within the largely closed-off world of the interdomestic sphere (Werbner, 1990) rather than a more public form of boundary-making. Nonetheless, such ritualised

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[47] Nevola (2015: 9, unpublished thesis) notes in his ethnography of Yemeni social hierarchies that the dominant discourse within Yemen reifies the concept of the *qabīla* with essentialist notions, writing: 'The principle that lies at the core of the Yemenite social hierarchical system is an essentialist representation of genealogical origins'.

performances are important in understanding how embodied subjectivity is attained with regards to ethno-cultural identities. As Werbner (2017: 8) notes, ethnicity is 'an expression of *multiple* identities': it is not enough to assume that (diasporic) Yemeniness equates to a single, fixed culture, but rather its performances are contextual, sometimes being intertwined with other identities. On the scale of the family, being 'Yemeni' is too broad a term; rather, the wedding celebration which I attended provides a glimpse of how the interdomestic space is important in producing *qabīlī*-Malāḥi-masculine identities in a diasporic context.

While the wedding followed the structure of a 'traditional' wedding in north Yemen quite closely, it is also important to note that this performance of Yemeniness should not be understood as evidence regarding an essentialised 'true/authentic Yemeniness'. Rather, I emphasise that it should be seen in relation to how Yemeni identity operates in Liverpool as a whole. That is to say, while performances of Yemeniness as seen during the wedding may represent reproduction of 'traditional' cultural forms or 'scripts', it is equally important to note that these scripts have 'travelled', gain new significance, and take place in particular context. Indeed, writing on Muslim religious subjectivities, McLoughlin (2015: 42) highlights that: 'Not least in a late modern age of glocalisation, all social actors are positioned by multiple and sometimes paradoxical "lived structures" from religious revivalism to consumer capitalism.'

The wedding itself followed quite closely the structure of what Caton (1993: 363) describes as a North-Eastern *qabīlī* wedding:

1) Luncheon
2) Groom's *zaffah* (procession)
3) *Qāt* chew
4) Dinner

5) *Samrah*, or evening entertainment

6) *Rifd*, or gift-giving

7) Bride's *zaffah*

8) Consummation of marriage

9) Morning shooting match

Excluding the elements which could not practically be performed in Liverpool and the absence of the bride's *zaffa*,[48] the wedding roughly followed these steps: 1) Lunch was served,[49] 2) the groom was introduced with a *zaffa* wearing the *janbiyya* (ceremonial dagger), 5) entertainment or *samra* in the form of music, dancing, and poetry was provided, 6) gifts and donations were made, concluding with a car parade. While the absence of the Yemeni landscape of the flood plains where the *zaffa* would take place leading to a nearby mosque inevitably means the wedding structure is re-created to suit the new context, the presence of Yemen throughout the wedding was tangible. Malāḥi-accented Arabic could be heard throughout the hall, Yemeni food was served, donations and messages from Yemen were received via the internet and announced, dress was for the most part *qabīlī*,[50] the hall was furnished by Yemeni-style low-seated cushions spread across the hall, and traditional forms of Yemeni poetry were recited.[51] Regarding the gift-giving (*rifd*), Caton (1993: 363) notes that: 'the assembled guests have the amounts of their contributions publicly disclosed and presented to the groom's family by the town-

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[48] I was informed that there was a separate celebration only for the bride and groom's immediate family, as this celebration was an all-male event.

[49] Big plates of *mandi*, a dish of rice and meat, were placed on the floor lined with plastic, where all of the men present sat to eat in a relaxed, informal setting.

[50] Maḥmūd noted that different parts of Yemen and different *qabā'il* have different styles of dress. Most of the men were wearing what he termed '*shālah*' (headdress), distinct from the *ghutra* worn in the Gulf States and parts of Saudi Arabia, and that approximately '80-90%' of the attendees were related and all Malāḥi. There was a mix of ages, with both young and older men present. A number of the older men noted that they had arrived in Liverpool relatively recently, having limited English ability. While the younger men spoke Scouse-accented English (or with accents from nearby towns such as Warrington) to myself and among themselves, most also seemed comfortable conversing in Arabic.

[51] The wedding took place in a community centre hall with little in the way of elaborate decoration, furnishings or formality.

crier (*dōshān*).' This mirrors the Liverpool wedding, except that the amounts were read out over a microphone by an attendee, not a designated *dōshān* – although as will be seen, this term of social status is known and discussed by several participants. In this way, the wedding was very much a translocal event, illustrating the translocal family: many of the donations were received from family members of the groom in Yemen (Malāḥ in particular), there was a constant streaming of congratulatory messages to the groom from Yemen, streaming of music which Maḥmūd informed me was particular to Malāḥ, and styles of dress particular to *qabīlī* regions of Yemen.

Caton (1993: 367) also comments on the importance of *zamīl* (praise) poetry in the wedding ceremony, noting that 'one group of men chants the first line and the other alternates with them in delivering the second line, and in this fashion they march in the flood plain until they reach the mosque or decide to begin another poem'. Many of the poems in the Liverpool wedding were composed in Arabic and recited by Maḥmūd himself, having verses ending in a rhyme of *-ah* or *-ā* which were echoed by the attendees. The use of poetry is also related to notions of masculinity in the *qabīla,* as Caton (1990: 26) in his ethnography of north-eastern Yemen gives the following anecdote when asking a *qabīlī* shaykh:

> 'How would I raise my son to become a *gabīlī*?'
> 'You must teach him four things: the dictates of Islam, how to shoot a gun, how to dance and how to compose poetry.'[52]

Dancing was also a major element of the wedding, at times formal and ritualised, at others more informal and celebratory. The dances were mostly led by older, Yemeni-born men with the younger men joining in after it had gathered some momentum. Maḥmūd noted

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[52] *Gabīlī*, rather than *qabīlī*, represents the usual Yemeni pronunciation of the letter *qāf* (q) as 'g'.

that three main dances were performed: *bara'*, *thulāthī* and *nafarayn*. In *qabīlī* Yemen, dance in such situations is another performance of masculinity, particularly the *bara'* with its intricate steps and competitive nature which alludes to 'key virtues of tribal personhood such as courage, stamina, self-possession, and martial prowess' (Caton: 1993: 366).[53] After the wedding I also asked Maḥmūd and other participants about how Yemeni weddings usually proceed in Liverpool. It was noted that 'Western-style' weddings with a formal dinner and attendees sat around tables are considered to be against the spirit of the *qabīlī* ethos for some segments of the population, or, only suitable for the women's celebration. This highlights the importance of diasporic aesthetics and ritualised performance in constructions of Yemeni-Malāḥi identities – to substantially move away from the aesthetics of a *qabīlī* wedding to a 'Western-style' wedding would be to cross a boundary, calling into question one's *qabīlī* masculinity. Nonetheless, this performance was largely an 'internal affair', being reproduced within the encapsulated interdomestic sphere rather than representing a construction of a boundary vis-à-vis others.

In many ways the wedding exemplifies the metaphor of 'roots and routes' which characterise diasporas: the wedding and other intimate events such as informal gatherings in the home provide a space to perform (masculine) 'Yemeniness' which is perhaps more informed by 'roots', but is nonetheless shaped by its 'routes' (metaphorically and literally) into the present. The new, non-Yemeni physical location where it takes place, the presence of Scouse-accented English, the use of modern communication technologies and the renegotiation of certain pragmatic concerns highlight the 'multi-local'. Additionally, although the wedding provides a largely encapsulated space for performances of Malāḥi-

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[53] In the *bara',* dancers gradually stop as they become exhausted with the increasing tempo (cf. Caton, 1993). In this wedding, Maḥmūd himself was perhaps the most competitive, being the final man in the dance a number of times.

qabīlī-masculinity according to the travelling and ritualised 'scripts' of Yemeni weddings, broader considerations such as choice of spouse will be seen to be more contested in the following section which more clearly exemplify 'routes' into the present. Related to this idea is that Yemeni ideologies of kinship and genealogy continuously reimagine the past into the present. Chapter 1 noted that while diaspora, ethnicity, and culture can be conceived as a process or a 'becoming', outside of academic discourse ethnicity/culture are still often felt to be relatively solid entities. In a globalising world where 'liquid modernity' increasingly disrupts and fragments deep and long-held attachments between people and places, such performances of culture can be understood as an attempt to fix an identity, inasmuch as all such performances are instances of reification. Nonetheless, this section has shown that the wedding itself represents a particular socio-cultural context – one in which the primarily older, Yemeni-born men direct its structure, such as by their leading of dances, making announcements, and ensuring certain norms such as the removal of shoes and seating arrangements were adhered to, thereby inducting the younger generations into a form of Malāḥi (or North Yemeni) male socialisation. This point also highlights that within this particular context, it is the local which takes precedence – the translocal connections, traditions and performances were discussed in localised terms as being 'Malāḥi' rather than simply 'Yemeni'. However, it is also the case that such performances take place alongside more ambivalent, hybridised articulations of identity. McLoughlin (2005a: 535) writes 'Depending on the dynamics of any context, then, and who one might be interacting with, people both *hybridise* and *ethnicise* their identities'. Applied to the Liverpool context, such examples of ethnicisation of a Yemeni identity are more clearly an internal affair – performances of Yemeni ethno-cultural identities for the second generation take place predominantly within the domestic/private sphere. Within this, Yemeniness is also not a single homogeneous construct, but is also localised,

gendered, and classed. The next section will now look more closely at Yemeni ideological

discourses of kinship and hierarchy from interviews with both male and female

participants. While the wedding paints a picture of largely uncontested performances of

qabīlī-Malāḥi ethnicity, discussions with participants reveal multiple perspectives on how

such structures come to be re-negotiated.

4.4 Contested Social Hierarchies

Kinship being a powerful marker of ethnicity and belonging, the *qabīla* allows an

individual to insert oneself into Yemen's past, situating themselves genealogically and

historically within this framework (cf. Caton, 1990, 1993). Thus the *qabīla* within Yemen

operates on both a personal, genealogical level, influencing marriage choices and

(re)producing kinship networks, while also operating on a wider scale in terms of political

alliances and *qabīla*-state relations. As the *qabīla* is much broader in scope than a narrow

genealogical tree, having roots in the remote past, it must be continually reimagined to

hold present relevance, and as Dresch (1989: 78) notes that, for example, Yemenis cannot

routinely trace their entire family history back to an eponymous *qabīlī* ancestor. Indeed

Nevola (2015: 26) demonstrates that a narrower unit of analysis, the *bayt* (house), holds

more immediate relevance than macro-groupings such as the *qabīla*.[54] In this study, the

focus is less concerned with fine-tuned genealogical groupings, and indeed this would

likely be impossible as much of Nevola's (2015) work demonstrates the close connection

of the reproduction of the *qabīla* to Yemen's physical and metaphorical geography;

whereas in the diaspora, knowledge routinely fragments becoming reconstructed according

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[54] 'People belonging to the same *beyt* clearly acknowledge a common eponymous ancestor at the macro-genealogical level. However, they also share a common ancestor who is 3 to 5 generations removed'. (Nevola, ibid.)

to new contexts. Therefore the focus of this section is to examine how the *qabīla/bayt* is narrated in constructions of Yemeni identity, further adding to the point that such performances of Yemeni identity which rely heavily upon transmitted knowledge and translocal connections occur primarily within the family network.

The following quotes illustrate how some participants narrated their lineage in terms of *qabīla.*

Maḥmūd (40s, born in North West, self-employed):

> So you'd mention locality or region, so I'd say I'm Radā'i, from Radā'. I think they are regional alliances and partially family as well. You can break that down into the family unit, so you'd say Radā'ī, then from the village, Malāḥī…and in Malāḥ because you're derived from one tribe in the village and that village has four tribes, you'd be under that category after that. For example, 'Awbalī. You'd name the local tribe from that village.'

Rīm (30s, born in Liverpool, social worker, family owns several newsagents):

> Yeah, we are *qabāyil*. My dad is like everyone's granddad, everyone's uncle. Even in a court room, the judge will highly respect him. If he was a bad man, they probably wouldn't, but he's like a noble man. He was in Yemen one time with a family and they were trying to have my dad off [colloquialism meaning 'to fool' or 'to trick'], and the judge said "Whatever [granddad] wants", because he was fair.

While membership in and genealogical ties to a *qabīla* are most often discussed in terms of patrilineal descent, and indeed participants also most often spoken in such terms as Rīm, noting that an older male family member of the father's side was like 'the village leader', Nevola (2015: 334) nonetheless demonstrates that knowledge of the matrilineal line (both its male and female members) is not ignored in Yemen. Similarly, Zamīla (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment including shop work) spoke exclusively of her maternal

grandfather, noting that he was a 'big *shaykh*' in his village, with reference to his *bayt* and its importance in the region, indeed his *bayt* was also mentioned as being the name of the village itself.

While such transmitted knowledge is maintained, its significance in the Liverpool context was contested. When asked if *qabīla* had any impact on marriage choices, Rīm noted: 'I'm just me. In this country it's more relaxed but in Yemen people would know your story, but here everyone is more or less the same'. Similar responses were echoed, with some noting that while their elders sometimes had strong opinions regarding who would be an appropriate spouse, expressed in terms of *qabīla/bayt* and Yemeni social hierarchies, second-generation participants rejected that such considerations would be a barrier for them. For example Layla (20s, born in Yemen, moved to L8 at a young age, student) notes:

> The fact that some girls couldn't get married to other people from other tribes because of their status. But *it used to be quite strong like ten years ago, but not now*.

Somewhat related to the notion of the *qabīla*, but nonetheless distinct, is that of social hierarchies in Yemen which Rīm also expanded upon. She made an explicit distinction between *qabāyil* families and what she termed as *dawāshī* families who were described as 'lower-class gypsies'. The word *dawāshīn* is the plural of *dawshān*, a term referring to individuals of a lower status in undesirable professions. Weir (2007: 59) notes that in Rāziḥ (far northern Yemen), this term is used both by *qabīlīs* to refer to anyone below *qabīlī* status, but also by:

> those who actually slaughter animals for a living, or who farm or trade, or regard themselves as socially superior to tanners, cuppers, circumcisers, and musicians, whom they refer to by the derogatory terms *dawāshīn* or *muzāyinah*. (ibid.)

Confirming the use of the term from a *qabīlī* perspective, Rīm noted that butchers are considered lower class or *dawāshīn*, and that while a man from a higher-class status may marry a woman of a lower-class, the reverse is discouraged.[55] While one's *qabīla* or *bayt* was not considered to hold significance for marriage choices, participants held different perspectives on the how Yemeni social stratification operates in Liverpool. Aḥmad (30s, born in Liverpool, education sector) noted that that a *qabīlī* would be very unlikely to take a *dawshān* spouse, even in Liverpool. However, Rīm contested this, citing the example of her now ex-husband whose mother was considered *dawshān* leading to several elder male members of her family discouraging the marriage the between the son of a *dawshān* women to a daughter of a *qabīlī* father. While such social hierarchies and their implications are known to, and sometimes directly experienced by participants, they are nonetheless now open to contestation, losing or changing significance as they travel. In the private sphere of the family, such ethnically-defined forms of kinship and hierarchy are known and may be felt as tangible, reinforced by trips to Yemen and the presence of (older) first-generation Yemenis to whom they still hold significance. However, they were more often evoked in an 'imagined' sense, connecting individuals to the places and histories of their forebears, rather than felt as exerting 'real' influence on second-generation participants' choices of spouse or friendships in the Liverpool context. In this travelling context, *ansāb* (genealogies), *qabīla/bayt*, and social hierarchies are re-imagined by second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis, but simultaneously transformed as the surrounding context of their social function (i.e. Yemeni society) is no longer present, further compounded by the relatively small number of Yemenis in Liverpool.

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[55] This accords with the literature on social stratification in Yemen, where it is noted that such divisions of social class seem to play a lesser role in the more rural areas such as Rāziḥ in the far north were 'There is no evidence that sharecroppers or wage laborers ever constituted a dependent and subservient economic or social class…as in regions with major and enduring inequalities in landownership such as the Tihāmah and the Ta'izz-Ibb region' (Weir, 2007: 33).

The above sections have explored Yemeniness in Liverpool and how localised Yemeni identities are produced/performed within family networks, aided by translocal connections to Malāḥ and other regions. It is necessary to take into account that these performances are situated, physically and discursively, in this new diasporic context. Performances such as the wedding and narratives of *qabīla/bayt* reveal that Yemeniness in Liverpool retains its connections to a specific territory in certain contexts: customs and traditions being noted as specifically Malāḥi, kinship being discussed with reference to the Yemeni village, sustained family connections and regular travel to Malāḥ, the translocal flows of people and goods, and the importance of language discussed further in this chapter. The following sections now broaden the scale to the neighbourhood, exploring how Yemeni identities among second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis are produced alongside hybridised Scouse-Yemeni identities in which the social imaginary of L8 and Liverpool are important.

4.5 Lodge Lane: *Bāb al-Yaman*

This section presents an ethnographic tour of Lodge Lane, highlighting the physical or 'visual' reality of the Arab/Yemeni presence in Liverpool. As has been noted, the physical presence of objects, foods, aromas, clothing, and so on are important in the production of 'aesthetic' diasporas (Crang, 2010). Werbner and Fumanti (2012: 3) similarly highlight that for many encapsulated diaspora groups, such aesthetically-rich spaces enable 'worlds of alternative cultural celebration within the nation; these too constitute liminal, "third" spaces'. Thus these aesthetic productions also take place in the physical spaces of diaspora, not only its imaginaries. Situated 'diasporic spatialities' are equally as important as the migratory journeys and 'spaces of identity' (Knott, 2010: 81). This section now highlights Lodge Lane's importance as Liverpool's main 'multi-ethnic' locality which has an increasingly visible Arab presence. Rather than being simply a 'Yemeni' locality, the

social imaginary of L8 for Liverpool-Yemenis will be seen throughout the ethnographic chapters as resting on its multi-ethnic nature – the layering of these histories are visible as Caribbean and African shops stand alongside Arab/Yemeni and Somali businesses.

Lodge Lane in many ways presents a microcosm of Toxteth's multi-ethnic histories but also stands as a metaphor for Liverpool-Yemeni life more generally. Located in the heart of L8, it is invariably considered the 'hub' of Liverpool-Yemeni life. Hayfā (30s, born in Liverpool, social worker) memorably noted that she and her friends would refer to Lodge Lane as *Bāb al-Yaman* ('The Gate of Yemen'), alluding to one of the entrances in the wall surrounding Old Ṣan'ā, painting a vivid picture of Lodge Lane as an 'entrance' into Liverpool-Yemeni life (reminiscent also of Rīm's earlier description of an American city as *Bāb al-Yaman*).

Figure 4: Lodge Lane. *David Harrison, 2019.*

Despite the general acknowledgement of Lodge Lane as a Yemeni hub, there are very few visual clues as to a specific *Yemeni* presence; rather the many shops and businesses present themselves as variously 'Arab'. The lack of establishments marketed as explicitly 'Yemeni' on Lodge Lane could stem from a number of reasons: an increase in non-Yemeni Arabs in the area meaning more 'generically' marketed establishments reach a wider audience, Yemeni cuisine being associated with family life and the home, and the relative popularity of Levantine cuisine throughout the Arab world which is well represented on Lodge Lane (Hammond, 2007: 134).

Beginning at the southern end, the multi-ethnic histories of Toxeth are immediately present: neighbouring Malaysian and Caribbean eateries stand opposite Fardowsa's Boutique which displays various Middle Eastern-style items of clothing in the window. Next door is the Somali Women's Group and Abdallah's Newsagents – one of the many Yemeni owned newsagents in and around Lodge Lane. Moving further up, a number of generically-named 'Middle Eastern' restaurants such as 'Marrakech' and 'Eastern' stand among newsagents and the Merseyside Sudanese Community Centre. While many of these restaurants are Yemeni-owned as participants mentioned and as trips to them revealed, very few are visibly designated 'Yemeni'. Participants spoke of there being an increase in restaurants and cafés over the last several years which were visibly Yemeni, and which I also observed. One which has only recently opened in the latter half of 2019 is called 'Anam's Kitchen', a recent addition to Lodge Lane's many restaurants, serving Yemeni dishes.

Figure 5: A Yemeni Restaurant. *David Harrison, 2019.*

While a specifically Yemeni element remains hidden among a more generalised Arab or Middle Eastern atmosphere, the many shop signs written in English and Arabic, the sounds of Arabic and Somali spoken along the street, and the many people wearing Yemeni, other Arab or Islamic dress, set it apart from other areas of the city and contribute to a multi-ethnic aesthetic which does not point clearly to any single diaspora.

Further up again is Green Mountain, a general store which stocks Arabian products, such as traditional Yemeni coffee, shisha pipes, Arabian incense, and so on. There are also various newsagents advertising 'cheap international calls' and 'money transfer services'. In among the various Middle Eastern-styled restaurants is also Rehoboth International African Market, reminding passers-by of Toxteth's other non-Arab groups and histories.

Towards the top of Lodge Lane are Sakoon and Coffee Lodge, both popular with local

Arab residents.[56]

Figure 6: An Arabic shop sign. *David Harrison, 2018.*

The Arabic sign reads: *'Abdul-Bāsiṭ al-Ṣūfī*, Quick Money Transfers, Yemen and Across the World'

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[56] Another point that requires underlining is the general lack of Yemeni-oriented (or even Arab-oriented) spaces for casual socialisation, for men or for women. Aly's (2015) study on young Arab-Londoners relied upon shisha cafés and similar establishments as they provided a space for young Arab-Londoners to socialise in a culturally traditional 'Arab' environment, without the presence of alcohol or other cultural taboos. However, even Lodge Lane as a Yemeni hub has no such spaces. The city-centre does have several shisha cafés, but these are largely frequented by students, Arab and non-Arab, rather than a clearly Liverpool-Yemeni base of customers. The lack of such spaces inevitably made it more difficult to recruit participants, especially young men as discussed in Chapter 2, as well as limiting observations to events-by-invitation and other institutions which have a high Yemeni presence, but are not exclusively 'Yemeni spaces' such as the community centres and mosques discussed in the following two chapters. Rather than this being simply a lack, however, understanding why it is so is telling in itself, as Hall (2012: 35) writes reflecting on Brah's cartographies 'the absent/presences are key parts of the "data" too'.

This brief tour of Lodge Lane underlines the approach of this thesis which emphasises the importance of scale and context in such a study. Although a specifically Yemeni presence may not be 'visible' to an outsider, I wish to move away from discussions of '(in)visibility'. Indeed, Yemenis are not invisible to each other, and Lodge Lane is nonetheless recognized as Liverpool's *Bāb al-Yaman* by second-generation participants. From an institutional and/or etic perspective, authors such as Halliday (2010: 131) and Seddon (2014) characterise British-Yemenis as historically 'invisible' with later generations achieving greater 'visibility'. Of course, institutional representation may be desirable or important in some contexts, but prioritising such accounts risks equating essentialised notions of (ethnic) 'community' with particular institutional portrayals, thereby becoming a dominant discourse. That is to say, such a focus prioritises an etic account or the accounts of 'community leaders', telling us little about the multiple, everyday negotiations/productions/performances of positioned identities in which 'visibility' may be of no great concern.

This tour of Lodge Lane has highlighted that although localised Yemeni identities are most clearly produced and performed in family networks, many Liverpool-Yemenis nonetheless live in the broader context of a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. This is important in the context of Liverpool as L8 continues to be produced, physically and in its social imaginary, as a locality of 'difference'. Although the road now has a more distinctly Arab presence, a participant from Brown's ethnography highlighted how it stood for an enforced 'boundary' for Liverpool-born Blacks in the 1960s and 1970s:

> It's funny–up by Lodge Lane there's a pub called the Boundary. And it actually *was* a Boundary for black people as far as I was concerned…Cops would actually say, "What are you doing going out of your area?" (2005: 49)

While such (literal) policing of boundaries has disappeared, participants often spoke of L8 and Lodge Lane as 'home' or an area in which the threat of racism was far less. Maryam (50s, grew up outside of Liverpool) noted that after visiting other regions of the city or other UK cities, returning to L8 felt like 'coming home'. Rīm, having grown up in North Liverpool before moving to L8, recounted an experience of the family shop being severely vandalised after 9/11, noting that incidents of racism were far fewer in L8. Frost and Catney's (2019: 9) article on place-indentity in L8 makes a similar finding, albeit without mention of Yemenis, noting: 'Neighbourhood belonging in L8 has assumed a more meaningful and elevated position in relation to residents' simultaneous attachments to Liverpool and the UK'.

Characterising L8 (and Lodge Lane) as 'multi-ethnic' is not to diminish the distinctiveness of each of its groups, but rather highlights that Liverpool-Yemenis do not routinely employ 'ethnicised' identities in a fetishised sense. That is to say, such boundary making occurs within the largely invisible (to a public/institutional gaze) but nonetheless richly textured world of the (inter)domestic sphere, and rests more clearly upon specific localities and groups of families rather than assertions of a national Yemeni identity vis-à-vis wider society. As Liverpool-Yemenis form a relatively small population, and in the absence of an established public diasporic sphere as discussed in the following chapter, attention must be given to the neighbourhood in which many everyday trans-ethnic encounters take place, and as the space where organic hybridisation occurs. Although the older generations may be more encapsulated, the physical and spatial reality of L8 means that for the second generation who have grown up in Liverpool, broader engagement in the neighbourhood means moving beyond purely Yemeni networks. Indeed, on an everyday neighbourhood-level Munīra spoke positively of the many inter-personal connections between her family and non-Yemeni neighbours. In this way, while the (encapsulated) translocal connections

and aesthetic production of a Yemeni diaspora contribute to the multi-ethnic landscape of L8, it is this landscape itself which is important in articulations of identity which extend beyond the family.

4.6 Scouse-Yemenis

Referring again to Brown's (2005: 130-131) words, Liverpool can be understood as an 'elaborate signifier' which the city's many (and historically, mainly) migrant groups have come to invest in and inscribe upon with their own productions of identity and locality. Rather than envisioning Liverpool as a single homogeneous 'city locality', Liverpudlian localities and Scouse identities are defined by the inhabitants varied migratory/diasporic histories and relations to the city as well as (and sometimes more clearly) sub-localities within the city, all ultimately combining to form this elaborate signifier. While the historical contingencies which presented the opportunity for the participants' parents' generation to open shops and become established as the largest Muslim group in the city are not exceptional *per se*, second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis incorporate the social imaginary of Liverpool into their own hybridised identities which emphasise Liverpool's 'fringe/marginal' position within England/the UK, geographically, demographically and historically. Thus I argue that Liverpool's position within the UK fosters forms of belonging and attachment which are strongly felt across the city's various groups. In this way, 'Scouse' identities can be understood as multiple, ethnicised, localised, gendered, classed, and so on; but it is above all a strong sense of attachment to 'Liverpool' (or a locality therein) as a signifier, rather than any particular (dominant) discourse or history, which allows such seemingly fluid hybridisation. The following quotes illustrate how Liverpool-Yemenis creatively combine 'Scouseness' with 'Yemeniness' in conscious and unconscious forms of hybridisation.

A memorable example was when Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism), unprompted, asked me whether I was going to ask why 'Yemenis feel so comfortable in Liverpool', to which she added:

> Yemenis, *they are the Scousers of the Arab world*, and the 'Scouse' term, I don't know how it's interpreted by other people, but when you look at the Liverpool people and the Yemeni people they really get on and that's why Yemenis identified with the people of Liverpool. There were so many interracial marriages in Liverpool, especially because they set up corner shops: they set up community hubs as well…So you know, when I speak to people they go: 'do you know the Yemeni family at the top of my street?' and more often than not I will. And Yemenis have had such an impact on Liverpool, so you know the families of my L8 neighbourhood saw my family grow up, they know my dad from when he came over. *They really have connected in such a way* and when you see Yemeni deaths happen, non-Muslims, Liverpool people come to the mosque and they go to their marriages and children's marriages. That's such a beautiful thing. Liverpool's so unique in that respect and it's not until you do go to other cities like Bradford or Birmingham which have issues, you know, it's not like that here in Liverpool. The Yemenis did an amazing job when they came over, they persevered, and Liverpool found the Yemenis to be just like them and vice-versa.

Similarly, Zahra (20s, born in Liverpool, student) says:

> I think they [Scouse and Yemeni] go together really well, I genuinely think a lot of people would say they are *just as proud to say they are Scouse as Yemeni*. I don't know, I feel Liverpool has a large part to play in this, like how friendly they are, well South Liverpool at least, how friendly they are to other ethnicities and that, so I think that played a large part and its really nice and you can't not be proud being from here especially with everything Liverpool has gone through like government cuts and I think there's just a sense of solidarity and it's very nice. It's a really good city to be honest.

Aḥmad (30s, born in Liverpool, education sector) noted that although he considers himself Scouse, there were several racist incidents in his majority-white North Liverpool neighbourhood:

I had a really strong Scouse accent when I was younger, I don't think you could get more Scouse than being born in my neighbourhood, so it was all like 'me ma, me da', but that was in conflict with 'no you're Arab, you're Muslim' but there wasn't really anything to pull it together so it was difficult at times. And then, after growing up there as well, it became a base for the National Front, and we were subjected to their attacks... Scouser is a really strong identity and Yemeni is a really strong identity and Arab was in there so it was quite complex.

While Maḥmūd (40s, born in the North West, moved to L8 at a young age, self-employed) articulated the diasporic tension inherent in being both 'there' and 'here':

Me as an individual, I'm split between *organic roots in Yemen* and also *organic roots here in Liverpool*, so in order for me to exercise my attitude and my way of thinking, this society at large, I'd have to be able to adapt, say for example, to society here and to be interactive with society at large here. And if I go to Yemen I have to fit in with the people there too.

The idea that 'Scouse and Yemeni' are so readily hybridised was repeated on many occasions, summed up in Layla's (20s, born in Yemen, student) comment:

Yemeni-Scousers are double trouble: we have the Yemeni confidence and the Scouse confidence.

This strong sense of attachment to Liverpool can be readily felt from the above quotes. Of course, this is not to simply paint a picture of Liverpool as a utopia of 'multiculturalism' (indeed Aḥmad's quote highlights this), but participants nonetheless discussed their identification with Liverpool in a manner reminiscent of Brown's (2005) Liverpool-born Black participants. I would further add that this attachment to locality is a sentiment familiar to most Liverpudlians. Thus, to paraphrase Brown's (ibid.) reflection on Liverpool-born Blacks' relation to the city: to understand Yemeni-Liverpool, you've got to understand the historical and contemporary production of 'Liverpool', the signifier.

What this section has attempted to delineate is not simply that Liverpool somehow has an exceptional ability to unproblematically incorporate its diaspora groups, but rather that the production of Liverpool as a locality-signifier and its social imaginary are deeply embedded within notions of a Scouse identity which is foremost predicated upon attachment, in whichever form, to the city (or its neighbourhoods). This does not exclude ethnicisation of identities, but given the specific historic, social, and demographic contexts which have shaped Liverpool-Yemeni life, I argue that this relation to Liverpool and/or L8 presents an alternative, demotic, discourse by which Liverpool-Yemenis assert hybridised identities. It is also important to note that these hybridised Scouse-Yemenis identities were not articulated as being in conflict with the more encapsulated world of the domestic sphere and spaces such as the wedding, but rather that ethnicised performances of Yemeniness were recognized as taking place in particular contexts, especially those where the older generation were likely to be present or assert authority in 'ethnic' matters.

Frost (2000) argues that 'Scouse' has historically been an insular white working-class identity which has excluded Liverpool-born Blacks despite their long presence in Liverpool. It is important to highlight the histories of systemic and everyday racism towards Liverpool-born Blacks and the many injustices faced, but I argue that Frost's (2000) account is somewhat reductive in not allowing for a more nuanced understanding of hybridised identities. Indeed, Brown's (2005) ethnographic account highlights the experiences of racism in Liverpool, but also delineates a much more complex and ambivalent reading of Black-Scouse identities in which attachment to Liverpool is very real, but is also a particular, lived, and historically sited attachment which necessarily differs from that of the city's white inhabitants. Frost herself recognises this, writing:

black people in Liverpool are every bit as 'Scouse' as white-working class Liverpudlians in that they speak with the same accent, they have a love of football and support one of the local teams (Liverpool), and they share the struggles of hardship, of unemployment, of stigma through their attachment to Liverpool. Indeed the belligerence and militancy that Liverpool became (in)famous for in the 1970s and 1980s finds expression in the more radical black organizations in Liverpool (2000: 214)

Thus I argue that the notion of multiple positioned belongings allows a more fluid view in which second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis are 'every bit as Scouse' as other Liverpudlians, while also acknowledging that Scouse identities themselves are contextual and relational, and can be embedded in various forms of exclusion and marginalisation. Scouse-Yemeni and Scouse-Irish identities certainly share some commonalities expressed primarily through attachment to Liverpool, but each is also constructed according to the specific historical and contingent contexts. It is also important to note that Scouse identities also operate on various scales: those who grew up outside of L8, while still emphasising Scouse identities, also noted experiences of racism which they felt would have occurred less in L8. Similarly, while those who grew up in L8 articulated Scouse identities as closely connected to their experiences in the neighbourhood, the following section will also show how participants also (contextually) employ Scouse identities in a broader city-wide sense vis-à-vis other areas of England and negative stereotyping of Liverpool.

Hybridised Scouse-Yemeni identities have been seen exist alongside constructions and performances of Yemeniness which are aided by translocality and the translocal family. Sometimes, such as in the wedding, these performances may emphasise the maintenance of tradition, and at other times creative negotiation and hybridisation were emphasised. However, as has been noted, several participants raised concern that with the current crisis

in Yemen the younger generations are increasingly less able to participate in or become familiar with Yemeni culture. This also highlights that the experience of simply being in Yemen for extended periods of time plays an important role in shaping the second-generation participants' constructions of Yemeni identities. In this way, second-generation participants' Yemeni identities are not formed through any form of 'formal' teaching, but rest upon organic, everyday and familial translocal modes of living. Future events may make the presence of Yemen in Liverpool much less tangible, and possibly lead to a loss of the strong translocal ties to Yemen which currently characterise the diasporic nature of Liverpool-Yemenis. The next section will now discuss the role of language (Scouse-English and Yemeni-Arabic) in the production of Yemeni and Scouse-Yemeni identities.

4.7 Language in the Diaspora: Arabic and Scouse

Language, like kinship and religion, can also often be a powerful marker of ethnicity. Suleiman (2011: 1) writing on the role of Arabic language in Arab (national) identities notes that: 'Under normal circumstances, the symbolism of language blends into a banal or quotidian view of identity that is hardly noticeable in everyday life.' However, in a diasporic context language gains extra significance as a powerful symbol of belonging (or anxiety) in the construction/performance of ethnic identities. In the Liverpool context, the importance is twofold: Yemeni-Arabic being a marker of ethnicity and 'difference' from non-Yemeni groups within Liverpool, but Scouse-English also being a marker of identity and 'difference' at the scale of the nation, and sometimes even within the city, as Chapter 3 noted. Language in the diaspora is often a bi- or multi-lingual phenomenon which can become very literally hybridised (Hall, 1990: 236). Canagarajah and Silberstein emphasise the importance of language in the diaspora:

> Part of that negotiation [of the intra- and intergroup relations] can entail multilingualism—a phenomenon that can complicate diaspora identity by moving the community from its heritage language—and it can simultaneously become a strategic resource as it helps members negotiate their layered identities and group relationships. (2012: 82)

Language can therefore play an important role in both the ethnicisation and hybridisation of identity, but it can also be a source of anxiety, sadness or nostalgia if proficiency in the 'homeland' language begins to fragment. All participants noted that they had competence in (Yemeni/Malāḥi) Arabic to varying degrees, with some such as Maḥmūd, Ṭāriq and Aḥmad considering themselves native speakers of Arabic, and others such as Layla and Hayfā expressing regret over their limited Arabic ability.[57] That Yemeni-Arabic continues to be spoken and/or understood by second-generation participants further reveals the real, translocal presence of Yemen/Malāḥ in Liverpool through the transnational family: to speak Yemeni (or Malāḥi) Arabic in certain contexts continues a linguistic and communicative connection to the 'homeland'. However, as connections to the homeland fragment and diasporas become more established, language proficiency can become lost.[58] This also emphasises the diasporic tension of second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis in that Yemeni/Malāḥi-Arabic is anchored in these territorial 'roots' most clearly visible within the family (i.e. in such statements as 'My parents speak in Arabic, but I reply in English'), but Scouse-English is the preferred '*lingua franca*' demonstrating 'routes' into the present. Language perhaps most clearly exemplifies that second-generation diasporans occupy a unique 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) in that they continuously negotiate and experience

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[57] Indeed these three participants would frequently switch to Arabic depending on whom they were talking to. Most Participants, excluding the above who were fully comfortable using Arabic, also stated that their parents' generation would speak in Arabic and they would reply in English.

[58] See Mills (2001) for a discussion on language ability among third-generation British-South Asian children, which notes 'All children…noted their lack of proficiency in their Asian languages'. See also Alba, Logan, Lutz and Stults (2002) for the 'three-generation model of linguistic assimilation'. Also Sofu (2009) for discussion on language shift in the three-generational model in Turkish-Arabic speaking families.

both 'roots' and 'routes', leading to multiple 'positioned belongings' (Brocket, 2020: 3).
For third and later generations for who become further distanced from the language of the
'homeland' and as transnational ties decrease as attachments to the new locality become
more solid, these 'roots' can become more metaphoric and re-imagined: it is perhaps this
re-imagining of a collective diasporic consciousness which allows a diasporic identity to
continue.

Understood in terms of a single language, Arabic also presents a complex situation. While
Standard or Classical Arabic is the 'official' language of Arab nations and the most usual
form of the written language, the Arab world is better characterised by *multiple* Arabics
which exist alongside a codified and standardised language. Suleiman (2011: 106) writes:
'Arabic speakers do conceptualise their language situation in a more or less dichotomous
way, ascribing different values to the *fuṣḥā* [Classical Arabic] and the *'āmiyyas* [dialectal
Arabic]'. Language itself can also become the subject of national ideologies and language
planning; Ferguson (2013: 124) in his study on language practices among Sheffield-
Yemenis notes differing perspectives on the Yemeni-Arabic of the home, and the
Standard/Classical Arabic of the school.[59]

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[59] A full account of the complex language situation in the Arab world is not within the scope of this thesis, but see Suleiman (2011) for a nuanced account on the interaction between *fuṣḥā* and *'āmiyya* in productions of Arab identity. In brief, the Classical Arabic of the Qur'ān provides a basis for Standard Arabic which has been 'promoted and protected vigorously in the twentieth century' (Brustad, 2017: 42), but this form of the language, enshrined in the Qur'ān, exists alongside contemporary Arabic varieties which have diverged considerably from the language of 7th century Arabic – so much so that some varieties are no longer mutually intelligible. Whether these contemporary Arabics are considered 'dialects' or 'languages' has been the source of much ideological debate (see Brustad, 2017). For this thesis, ideological debates aside, it is important to simply note that Arabic speakers negotiate a complex situation moving between multiple forms and registers of language, and that these forms of Arabic are also associated with their own spheres of usage.

Participants discussed a plethora of views and perspectives, with some regarding Yemeni/Malāḥi-Arabic as an important part of 'Yemeniness', while others prioritise Classical Arabic as a means to engage in religious learning and interact with other Arabic speakers. Nonetheless, the participants' articulated attitudes to Arabic and its role in producing Yemeniness as contextual and relational: speakers reported freely mixing or code-switching between varieties of Arabic. When amongst other Yemenis or Malāḥis (i.e. in family contexts), these dialects were felt as important, but in mixed-Arab settings, code-switching and/or hybridisation was predominant.

The following excerpt from an interview with Zahra (20s, born in Liverpool, student) gives a strong sense of how Yemeni-Arabic is felt to be an important element of Yemeni ethnic identity, while also simultaneously becoming hybridised in the context of multi-ethnic L8:

Researcher: That's brought us to the question of Arabic language, how does that feature in a Yemeni identity in Liverpool?

Zahra: Very strongly, I feel like people, especially with the dialect and [being] so proud to be Yemeni…because it's so strong, the Yemeni dialect is enhanced. And I feel like that's another way I'm being separated from them [due to lack of fluency]. But I've noticed with some Yemenis their Arabic is starting to mingle with other dialects, so some Yemenis and Somalis are friends, especially the lads*, their dialect is getting mixed in with Somali too* which is quite cool, but this might be why it's difficult to have an Arabic which is not like the standard.

Researcher: Do you speak Arabic at home?

Zahra: They [my parents] speak to us in Arabic and we reply back in English. I can understand a lot more than I can speak. It's annoying because I could speak it when I was young but I just lost it somehow. Most people I know my age can speak Arabic, the only people who can't are me and my older and little sister, but my brother can speak Arabic because he got left in Yemen for a year.

Researcher: So what are your feelings on learning Arabic in Liverpool?

Zahra: I think it would influence the community in a positive way, *especially the dialect, it would make you feel more Yemeni,* and Arabs who speak another dialect you'll know you're not from the same place, that proves, engrains that you are Yemeni.

Zahra's account that Liverpool-Yemeni Arabic is becoming hybridised with Somali also again highlights the close connection, historically and geographically, between Yemen and Somalia and its re-creation in the Liverpool context. Her comment also demonstrates that hybridity can occur on multiple levels, not only as a result of the diasporic group's contact with the language/culture of the majority population, but also between minority groups. Further to the emphasis I place on a multi-scalar perspective, the language practices expressed regarding Arabic also operate on different scales. Whereas Yemeni/Malāḥi Arabic is located in and oriented towards 'roots' in Yemen and the family, other forms of Arabic are prioritised when moving to the scale of neighbourhood (Toxteth/L8) where Liverpool-Yemenis are increasingly in contact with non-Yemeni Arabs or Arabic speakers, and on a global scale where Liverpool-Yemenis situate themselves vis-à-vis the broader Arab and Muslim world.

Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment) further illustrated this when I asked whether the Yemeni dialect was important to her:

Definitely, one-hundred percent. Like my sister can speak with different dialects and it can really help her in different situations. So if you're with all Malāḥis there's no point speaking *fuṣḥā* [Classical Arabic] because you can't interrelate with them and, you know, it can even be seen as snobbery and when you're with, like, Adenis or people from Syria or *al-Khalīj* [the Gulf] you really do need to have their slang or dialect to feel like you're almost accepted. But saying that, on Lodge Lane, there is this wonderful women's group with people from all different places, and *they all change their accent depending on who they're sitting with*. They could be sitting with a number of women in one room and even if they move around and sit with

different people, they change accents. It's mostly Yemenis, but there is Somali and Libyan and Algerian. It was Yemeni heavy, but it's a nice mix now. But that's for my parents' generation, but *for my generation we are completely mixed*. There's no issue with having an African friend, a Latvian friend, everyone is mixed…

Maḥmūd notes that formal Arabic learning in his experience in Liverpool is centred around the Qur'ān, which does not necessarily allow heritage speakers of Arabic to engage with wider (non-religious) literature and participation in the language. Indeed, Maḥmūd was very passionate about encouraging opportunities for Arabic speakers in Liverpool to improve their Arabic literacy beyond religious scripture:

> Because I actually lived in Yemen for many years, the language that I learnt is actually Arabic, but it's an accent isn't it, it's derived from the classical Arabic language and when I actually explored how it is actually spoken in Morocco and Egypt, it gave me more confusion, so it became really off-putting if the accent in Yemen is different so far and different again in Saudi Arabia.

> What also I've noticed is that a lot of the communities, whether its Yemeni or any other community, the only time they put in an effort to learn Arabic is when they exercise the rote-learning. So they memorise verses from the Qur'ān and sometimes a lot of the people actually learn quite substantial amounts by memorisation. That's a good thing, memorisation in general, whether its verses from the Bible or Qur'an things like that, but the question is that if your language skills are going to be hindered and you're just going to memorise, you're just doing half the job.

The Scouse accent has also been mentioned as forming a salient element of Scouse identities, as Boland notes that:

> an effective understanding of a Scouser is not only spatial – someone born in Liverpool – because the sonoric landscape of spoken Scouse, and thereby Scouse identity, extends beyond the contemporary political-administrative-geographic boundary of the City of Liverpool (2010: 2)

As Chapter 3 argued, Scouse identity is constructed in terms of attachment to 'Liverpool the signifier', and its performance is perhaps best encapsulated in the Scouse accent. As a quote from Brown's (2005: 107) ethnography showcases the idea that the Scouse accent is an important marker of identity for Liverpool-born Blacks, quite apart from other English identities ('We only know one *language*, that's Liverpudlian'), this section will show that Liverpool-Yemenis have also inscribed the accent with significance. While Arabic in its multiple forms is maintained via the family, becoming further associated with broader forms of transnationalism (e.g. as a means of communication when traveling to other Arab countries, consuming Arabic literature/media), attachment and attitudes to the Scouse accent highlight the multiple positioned belongings of Liverpool-Yemenis: within Liverpool, Yemeniness is contextually ethnicised and hybridised, however participants noted that outside of Liverpool or among non-Liverpudlians 'difference' was also construed in relation to 'Scouseness'.[60] When asked about the important of the Scouse accent to her own identity, Zahra (20s, born in Liverpool, student) noted:

> This conversation has actually come up a lot recently. I would say *I'm Scouse because I want to represent Liverpool*, but it comes with the downside of the class issue because I find a lot in uni, they think if you're Scouse you're not that smart, like they thought they were smarter than me and I couldn't tell if it was because of race, sex, or class so I softened my accent a bit which was really frustrating. But if I'm around people who aren't Scouse and I don't like them*, I go really Scouse*.
>
> [...]
>
> I actually think it's partly because Liverpool is a port city that *we distinguish our accent from everyone else*, like 'you aren't part of us', other British people, like our accent has got stronger, I know it got stronger when people came over from Ireland.

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[60] For example the reading-group set up by Maḥmūd, the aim of which was to encourage broader literacy skills in Arabic to be able to read non-religious material, or the role of Arabic as a means to enjoy popular Arabic culture such as songs. However, most participants mentioned that they did not actively follow any Arabic news channels or newspapers noting that this was something their parents' generation were more likely to do.

Similarly, Munīf (60s, born in Yemen, community leader, living in Liverpool since the 1980s and has children raised in Liverpool) noted regarding the Liverpool-born generations that:

> There is a lot of positive things between the new generation, and if we can utilise that and nurture it, because the new generation feel so proud being Scouse, *especially with their dialect*, you know, *they're Scousers.*

The manner in which Liverpool-Yemenis articulate their relationships to Yemeni/Classical Arabic and Scouse provides a clear context for these 'multiple positionings' in this interstitial space: Yemeni-Arabic continuing the 'sonoric landscape' of the homeland and the family, Classical Arabic providing a link to the broader Arab and Muslim world(s), and Scouse in the production of (hybridised-localised) Scouse-Yemeni identities. These contexts are not, however, always completely 'separate'; language also combines in processes of hybridisation as exemplified by the regular use of Arabic greetings and formulaic Islamic phrases amidst otherwise Scouse-accented conversations.

4.8 Travelling Imaginaries of Yemen

Vertovec notes that:

> Compounding the awareness of multi-locality, the 'fractured memories' of diaspora consciousness produce a multiplicity of histories, 'communities' and selves – a refusal of fixity often serving as a valuable resource for resisting repressive local or global situations. (1999: 450)

This chapter thus far has highlighted that (ethnicised) Yemeni identities and 'Yemeniness' are constructed and performed largely within the hidden world of the interdomestic sphere indicative of an encapsulated aesthetic diaspora. In these constructions, specific localities

within Yemen, particularly Malāḥ, have been seen to be more salient than reference to the 'nation', but this is not to say that there is a lack of 'national belonging'. This section will now explore these 'fractured memories' in how second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis produce/articulate imaginaries of Yemen which draw primarily upon Yemen's ancient histories and its broader position within the Arab world. In this way, Yemen is 're-imagined' against two main antagonisms; one being internal divide, and the other being outside stereotyping and interference.

Some participants spoke about the civilizational histories of Yemen, mentioning that they were a source of pride strengthening their emotional connection to Yemen. While these articulations draw upon imaginaries of Yemen stemming from the region's ancient past rather than referencing Yemen as a contemporary nation state, Wedeen (2008: 37) nonetheless notes that 'Like most nationalist discourses, Yemeni ones stress the people's antiquity, their continuous occupation of a territory coincident with unified Yemen'. Although such imaginaries have been popularised by nationalist discourses, it was notable that the participants used these in response to the current crisis and intra-Arab stereotyping of Yemenis as 'poor' or 'backwards'.

Aḥmad (30s, born in Liverpool, education sector) contrasts Yemen's history with that of the Gulf States:

> Yemen had existed as a civilization way before Islam, didn't it. So you've got like Ma'rib, Sheba and Ḥimyar, and the Jewish rulers, and the frankincense trail, and the great ports and the idea of having a great civilization. Some of them in the Arabic Peninsula are intent to bomb these sites which is a political thing...but I think there's some jealousy there, they place it in the Gulf, and you know...the deserts were all just backwaters and they feel challenged by that.

Maḥmūd (40s, born in Merseyside, self-employed) notes that greater emphasis on these histories would strengthen a specifically Yemeni identity:

> I think one of the reasons why we are at a greater loss of becoming more Yemeni-identifiable is because the majority of the Yemeni population, they're rejecting to know the historical roots of Yemen. So I think if people were given the opportunity to learn more about the historical factors and combine that with religious belief, it would make us a much more positive civilization for years to come.

Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) relates them to the current crisis:

> When I think of those times there is a sense of pride, but on the other hand it's so unfortunate the state Yemen finds itself in now, even before the war, there's been a massive hindrance in the education of Yemenis and how that's actually impacted Yemen as a country. And I blame things like women not being given enough freedom and the mass cultivation of *qāt* which you know, anaesthetises Muslim men.

Rīm (40s, born in Liverpool, social work) draws upon them situationally in broader Arab-contexts:

> I think we are the root of the Arabs. We were the first Arabs on earth. Like when I went to Morocco. You know the Berbers, they were like original bedouins, from the Yemen and Saudi area, so when we were like 'We're from Yemen', as soon as they knew that, they'd do that [places hand on head] to show respect and we'd be like 'We're your ancestors!' [laughs] And there would be a bit of banter. Any Arab country that I've been to, once they know you're Yemeni they're just lovely to you. It's bizarre. Yeah...except Saudi. Maybe Dubai as well, it's so mixed now, but there's a lot of Yemenis in Dubai. Some Emiratis think they're better than Yemenis, but Dubai was just built up, there wasn't even such a thing as Dubai.

While participants were very much aware of these histories, they also remind us of Brah's (1996: 186) point that 'Since all these markers of "difference" represent articulating and performative facets of power, the "fixing" of collectivities along any singular axis is

seriously called into question'. In this case, these histories of Yemen disrupt the notion of a single 'Arab' identity by accentuating Yemen's position within the Arab world as an often overlooked, marginalised region despite its important place within broader Arab history. Similarly, 'fixing' a Yemeni national/cultural collectivity with such a discourse also requires recognising that these are continually performed and re-made in creating a sense of ethno-cultural unity. While these imaginaries may indeed stem from and be reinforced by nationalist discourses popularised and propogated in the two Yemens from the 1920's, they are notable in that they do not invoke Yemen with reference to the modern-day state or in its political context. Like the *qabīla* and its genealogies, they bring Yemen's past into the present in a semi-mythologised form which transcends modern notions of 'nation' and 'state', instead asserting Yemen's continuity as a cultural and geographical space. Such a romanticised or idealised re-imagining of the parents' 'homeland' has also been recognised in other studies, such as Bhimji's (2008) study on 'cosmopolitan belonging' among second-generation British South-Asians. In addition, while such 're-imaginings' of Yemen are persistent in situating participants in Yemen's 'collective' past and also the broader historical Arab context, they are not the source of any mobilisation. Indeed, in contrast to other participants, two community leaders (discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter) noted that they find notions such as 'Yemenis are the root of all Arabs' as unhelpful and possibly detrimental in that they 'create divisions' being antithetical to notions of 'inclusivity' and 'diversity'.

While most participants were aware of Yemen's ancient histories, an emerging concern was also the lack of access to education regarding Yemen and a broader lack of knowledge of Yemen's history. This lack can be seen as partially reflecting the fragmentation of knowledge in the diaspora as well as the approach taken by the 'community' centres, but

as Munīra's quote highlights, it also reflects the incapacity or underdevelopment of Yemen's (national) educational infrastructure, particularly in regions such as Malāḥ which are far from the more developed areas of Ṣan'ā and Aden.

Although these *social* imaginaries of Yemen are influenced by nationalist discourses, I contend that second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis do not collectively re-imagine Yemen primarily as a political entity, but rather draw upon romanticised visions of Yemen which emphasise its cultural continuity as a means to cement their own identities in Yemen's collective past without becoming embroiled in the political and geographical divides which continue in Yemen. These discourses can be read as simultaneously dominant and demotic: in some ways they are 'dominant' and 'nationalist' in the Yemeni context in that they present an essentialised imagining of Yemen and Yemenis as a single ethno-cultural group connected by kinship and the collective past, but they are nonetheless employed demotically by participants in the diaspora, countering the idea of a monolithic 'Arab' identity and de-emphasising political divides. In addition, I argue that Yemen is re-imagined in this way precisely due to the country's turbulent and traumatic experiences of nation-building post-unification, but such an imaginary has not transferred into mobilisation around Yemeni political issues on any great scale in Liverpool as the following chapter will explore. Many participants noted that they did not actively follow Yemeni politics or news, did not feel a North/South divide as relevant to their everyday lives in Liverpool, and responded to the current crisis with more reference to the ensuing humanitarian disaster than discussion of political alliances. Wedeen (2008: 66) herself notes the ambivalent nature of 'national belonging' in Yemen in which visions of a unified Yemeni culture/ethos rooted in the region's past exist alongside 'specifically regional and

denominational identities, as well as conflicting views about the importance of piety',

arising from resistance to 'predatory' regimes.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explored two key themes: the production and performance of

(Liverpool-) Yemeni identities in the interdomestic sphere (Werbner, 1990), alongside

more hybridised articulations and performances of identity which are centred around the

multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Toxteth and the social imaginary of Liverpool. Strong

attachment to both Malāḥ/Yemen and Toxteth/Liverpool was clear throughout

observations and interviews; sometimes combining, sometimes separate. While

constructions and performances of 'Yemeniness' (or Malāḥiness) continue to root second

generations in Malāḥ/Yemen, aided by translocal flows and practices, they also negotiate

their identities in the context of a diasporic tension. I argue that second-generation

diasporans perhaps feel this tension most keenly as they are at once looking towards

'roots' as represented by the older generations of their (Yemeni-born) parents and

extended family, while simultaneously looking towards 'routes' in Liverpool. Third-

generation diasporans, being born to those already born and raised in the diaspora, present

a new stage where the pull towards 'roots' may not be as intensely experienced. The

current crisis in Yemen has accentuated this as second-generation participants discussed

how it could lead to a loss of Yemeni identity in the city as their (third-generation)

children have little connection to Malāḥ/Yemen. This highlights the importance of the

lived experiences of being in Yemen which underscores much of the second-generation

participants' accounts. Additionally, while performances of 'Yemeniness' or 'Malāḥiness'

in the family are more clearly centred on the (trans)local, second-generation participants

also re-create and articulate an imaginary of Yemen which allows for a sense of national

belonging, but it is nonetheless somewhat distanced from the turbulent national politics of Yemen. In this way, the 'homeland' is not just a physical location, but also the continuous negotiation of the past into the present and vice-versa which does not necessarily take the nation state as its primary unit of reference. In this way, this and the following chapter are cognisant of Werbner's point that:

> A late modern analysis of diaspora should aim to reveal the dialectics between diaspora aesthetics and 'real' political mobilization. Exclusive attention *either* to diasporic organization and transnational connections *or* to the aesthetic products of diaspora leads to the false assumption that one is in some sense predictive or epiphenomenal of the other. (2011:472).

This chapter has also emphasised a view in which hybridity is not merely a romanticised vision which unproblematically unifies multiple identities and resolves these tensions, but rather a view which acknowledges these tensions as central to identity-production in a diaspora. Hutnyk (2010) in a critical appraisal of 'hybridity' asserts that hybridity theory should not be understood as referring to the mixing of two discrete 'purities' but instead as 'a process rather than a description' (ibid., 60). Thus far the thesis has emphasised that both Scouse and (regional) Yemeni identities are produced contextually and relationally, embedded in their own confluence of narratives and contingent histories, rather than being a singular pre-fixed given. This being the case, this chapter has also attempted to delineate how 'hybridised' Scouse-Yemeni identities are not the result of the combination of two essentialised 'pure' identities – both non-white Scouse identities in L8 and other neighbourhoods and regional Yemeni identities emerge out particular sets of sited contingencies and confluences, the intersection of which reveals a much messier, more complex and ambivalent picture. Therefore the emphasis on *contextual* identities remains an important analytic lens in discussing participants' multiple belongings. While these

identities may at times be separated, their construction and performance are not simple re-productions. A Yemeni wedding performed in Liverpool, while partially reproducing Yemeni cultural and aesthetic performances, is also being performed in a new context, gaining new significance.

Bauman writes that:

> The image of the world generated by life concerns is now devoid of the genuine or assumed solidity and continuity which used to be the trademark of modern "structures". The dominant sentiment is the feeling of uncertainty. (1997: 50)

In some ways, the (re)-ethnicisation of identity can be read as seeking to anchor oneself against this radical uncertainty which diasporans encounter directly. A (re)-ethnicised identity anchored in the family provides a potent form of belonging, maintaining a link to people and places elsewhere. Bauman's notion of 'liquid modernity' captures the uncertainty of the postmodern, but nonetheless ethnic/cultural/local identity is still felt as 'something', as Hall (1990: 226) writes 'The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it…is always-already "after the break"''.

Finally, according to DeHanas (2013a: 73) useful table of 'theorised styles of second-generation youth self-identification', the material in this chapter has explored how second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni identities contain elements of both '*continuity*' and '*hybrid or situational'* identities when examining these on the scale of everyday families and neighbourhoods. For this reason, I have avoided generalising any single category of 'self-identification' to characterise participants, instead placing the emphasis on multiple subjectivities and collective (cultural) identities which can, and do, occur depending on the scale, context, and relations involved. In contrast to DeHanas' (ibid.) study which

concludes that de-culturated (Muslim) identities provide a strong form of attachment for East End Bengalis, sometimes taking preference over ethnicised/localised identities, this chapter has demonstrated that ethnicised (culturated) Yemeni identities continue to hold relevance for second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis, being constructed and performed via the transnational family, but also becoming hybridised alongside Scouse identities. Further to this, I add that DeHanas' (ibid.) category of '*between cultures*' with theorised language such as '*It's hard to be Bengali here…*' was expressed ambivalently in the Liverpool context. Some participants noted this tension between 'roots' and 'routes' growing up in that they would be 'Scouse' outside the family, but 'Yemeni' inside the family (see e.g. Aḥmad and Munīra's quotes). However, participants also spoke positively of 'being Yemeni here', emphasising the perceived similarities between Liverpudlians and Yemenis which have allowed organic hybridisation and more confidently asserted outward-facing Scouse-Yemeni identities, such as when Maḥmūd noted his 'organic' roots 'here' and 'there'. The notion of de-culturated (Muslim) identities will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 6 which examines how the forms of identification explored in this chapter interact, combine or conflict with religious identity. The next chapter will now discuss whether Liverpool-Yemenis imagine and/or mobilise around an ethno-national 'community', and how both the national contexts of the UK and Yemen have impacted the trajectory of Yemeni-led 'community' building in Liverpool.

Chapter 5: Contesting an Ethno-National 'Community'

5.1   Introduction

Building upon the findings from the previous chapter, this chapter now broadens its scale of focus from the family and neighbourhood to notions of an ethno-national 'community'. While this chapter refers to Baumann's (1999) 'nation' of the multicultural triangle, such a starting point has been problematised. Thus this chapter discusses the national contexts of both the UK and Yemen from several angles. Not beginning with assumptions that Liverpool-Yemenis form any single 'community' organised around a Yemeni national identity, this chapter explores whether Liverpool-Yemenis organise/mobilise around such an ethno-national imaginary, and if not, what alternatives exist. Remaining sensitive to the notion of multiple positioned belongings, the dominant (national/local) discourses and the roles of a particular set of 'community leaders' are juxtaposed with the second-generation participants' more demotic articulations and forms of social engagement. In so doing, it also assesses whether an ethno-national diasporic public sphere has emerged in the Liverpool context. While the salience of (trans)locality has been noted in the previous chapter, localities are nonetheless embedded in broader circuits of power, therefore this chapter also explores the national ideologies, agendas, and contexts of the UK and Yemen which have impacted Yemeni-led 'community' building in Liverpool.

In the popular usage of the term, 'community' is notoriously under-specified referring to collectivities along various scales: an ethno-national 'community', a religious 'community', a regional 'community', down to the level of a neighbourhood 'community'. Here, 'community' is understood in Anderson's (1983) terms as a discursively created and imagined collectivity which goes beyond the regular, and usually face-to-face, contact

sustained in family networks.[61] While Baumann's (1996) study begins with an already-identified dominant discourse in the context of Southall which equates reified cultures with a 'communities', such a starting premise was much less clear in the Liverpool context given the relatively small number of Liverpool-Yemenis and lack of institutional 'representation', the reasons for which are discussed in this chapter. Instead, this chapter begins by detailing the history of Yemeni 'community building' in Liverpool as seen from two perspectives: that of the earlier first-generation who largely moved to Liverpool from the late 1970s and early 1980s following high unemployment in regions such as Sheffield, and that of a particular group of Yemeni-born 'community leaders' whose social capital differs markedly from others of the first-generation, and whose 'community' building projects have become consolidated in playing a prominent role in the 'community' landscape of Liverpool. It will also be seen how national and local discourses/agendas such as 'Community Cohesion/Prevent' and Liverpool City Council's dominant discourse of 'Liverpool: World in One City' (which itself is influenced by the neo-liberal restructuring of the economy and efforts of 'civic boosterism') have affected the trajectory of such community building projects.

Related to the notion of 'community' and its various institutions is that of a diasporic public sphere, which for Werbner (2002a: 262) is 'a space in which *unrelated* individuals meet to debate broader civic and political issues' (italics mine). The existence of a diasporic public sphere is in some ways indicative of a 'mature' diaspora which has sustained a diasporic consciousness, and established an arena for debate not limited to family networks. In this way, diasporic identities and positionalities are not homogeneous

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[61] Although in a diasporic context, face-to-face contact for translocal families may instead be mediated by new communications technology, or occur only semi-regularly during trips to the family's region of origin.

or uncontested, but are exemplified in the diasporic public sphere 'as the product of shared foci of passionate debate' (ibid., 252), reflecting internal heterogeneity and conflict, but sharing national and/or local concerns. Nonetheless, this chapter argues that studies of diaspora must be attentive to the context both 'here' and 'there' in order to better comprehend the dynamics behind the emergence (or non-emergence) of such a public sphere. Whether or not the Yemeni 'community' landscape in Liverpool evidences an ethno-national diasporic public sphere will be considered throughout this chapter.

5.2 (Dis)junctures in Community Building

Prior to the 1980s, given the small number of Yemenis in Liverpool (estimated around 100 in 1976 according to Halliday, 2010: 54), there appears to have been a limited amount of 'community' building, as Halliday (ibid., 56) notes, without giving a precise date of its establishment, the existence of a 'Yemeni school funded by the council' alongside plans to 'set up a community association'. From the 1980s and 1990s onwards as the number of Yemenis in Liverpool began to increase, a number of small-scale 'community' centres/associations were established which represented various Yemeni groups along differing axes (North, South, Adeni, religious, secular). During this phase, these centres were more clearly 'Yemeni' spaces as is clear from their names, such as the Aden Community Centre (formerly the Aden Community Association, and Aden Management before that), the Merseyside Yemeni Community Association (formerly the Yemeni Community Association Liverpool), and the Liverpool Yemeni Arabic Club, among others. It has been difficult to ascertain specifically which of these was the earliest to be established, as participants noted attending various Yemeni-Arabic schools/centres during the 1980s and 1990s which have subsequently changed names, location, or leadership. Nonetheless, the important point is that during this first phase of community building,

these associations had a clearly Yemeni orientation, were small-scale and somewhat fragmented. It was only during the early-to-mid 2000s that a phase of consolidation began in which two earlier associations came to dominate the contemporary 'community' landscape, although it will be seen how their focus has shifted from a more 'Yemeni' orientation to one which places greater emphasis on 'inclusivity and diversity' in line with several dominant discourses and the particular positionality of a group of community leaders. The trajectory of Yemeni-led community building will be seen to exemplify Werbner's outline of the two stages of community associations and/or social movements which move from 'fission' to 'fusion', albeit with its own particular contingencies in the Liverpool context:

> During the initial stage…associations remain relatively discrete and often compete with one another, both for state allocations and on ideological grounds. […] The second stage of a social movement, *ideological convergence*, involves the formulation of a common discourse and set of objectives in relation to the state or local state, and with regard to the contemporary condition of the group within the larger society (1991a: 13)

Of the above mentioned centres/associations, the Aden Community Centre and the Merseyside Yemeni Community Association continue with a specifically 'Yemeni' orientation as evidenced in their names, but are now only open sporadically and operate on limited budgets which appear to rely largely upon charitable giving, a small number of awards from the National Lottery, as well as a small number of grants from Liverpool City Council.[62] This is in contrast to the consolidation of the main 'community' centres/schools which have access to greater sources of funding discussed below.[63]

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[62] Although the Merseyside Yemeni Community Association now also provides services which are accessed by other groups in L8, such as Somalis and Sudanis, further highlighting the many connections between L8's various ethnic groups as well as the earlier establishment of Yemenis in the city.

[63] These larger organisations perform various functions, including Arabic supplementary schools, organising various events and workshops, providing services such as translation/interpreting, assisting in navigating welfare bureaucracy, and other projects which will be discussed further in this chapter.

During the fieldwork period, I volunteered at a larger-capacity Arabic school in the city which emerged out of an earlier Yemeni 'community' association and is now led by a particular set of Yemeni community leaders whose social capital differs (see Bourdieu, 1986, for his theorisation of cultural and social capital as distinct from economic capital) from that of the first-generation migrants. It will be useful to first discuss the positionality of these actors whom I characterise as 'urban Yemeni community leaders' before discussing the trajectory of Yemeni-led 'community building' and 'cultural' projects in Liverpool which, owing to a confluence of factors, has moved away from a purely ethno-national Yemeni focus and instead has come to incorporate Liverpool City Council's motto of 'Equality, Diversity, and Integration' which aligns with national discourses of 'Community Cohesion'.

Although this thesis is not only concerned with 'community leaders', it is important to recognise the conditions by which such 'leadership' and the representations of 'community' they produce come about. In Werbner's (1991b: 92) terms, community leaders function as 'ethnic brokers', acting as intermediaries for those who they claim to represent and the state or local state in obtaining resources and providing services – this in some ways presupposes that such leaders either possess the social capital necessary to navigate the state-'community' interface, and/or, their status is internally recognised as such (see Werbner, 2002a, who discusses the role of patronage, charitable giving, and the politics of 'honour' among Manchester-Pakistani community leaders). In this sense, the construction of ethnic boundaries may also be directly impacted by relations with the state due to competition for the allocation of resources and the necessary strategic negotiations to secure these (Werbner, 1991b: 78). Nonetheless, the representativeness of such leaders has also been critically questioned by scholars such as Gilliat-Ray (2010: 107, citing

Kundnani, 2007: 181) who notes regarding 'Muslim community leaders' that 'the state selectively supports those individuals "who are chosen on the basis of their effectiveness in containing dissent and serving strategic interests, often as much linked to foreign policy as domestic affairs"', and Werbner (1991b: 97) who notes that in comparison to 'invisible leaders' (such as those who were the focus of her 2002a study) of the diasporic public arena, such 'state-sanctioned' leaders 'usually lack widespread internal legitimation and do not consult group members regarding policy questions'. Nonetheless, it is worth noting here that while on the one hand, these particular community leaders negotiate the dominant discourses, navigating council bureaucracy and funding bodies in presenting outward-facing 'inclusive' establishments, on the other hand they also participate to varying degrees in 'everyday' Liverpool-Yemeni life, sensitive to questions of religion and culture. Therefore two main arguments run through the following sections: that a) this particular group of community leaders align the respective organisations to state/local discourses on 'community' and 'culture', evidenced by funding sources and the orientations of the various associations/centres/schools, but their positionalities also arise out of a particular cosmopolitan Yemeni milieu, and in contrast, that b) the 'everyday' second-generation participants are largely not invested in imagining a single ethno-national Yemeni 'community' as a basis of ethnic mobilisation or boundary making; instead I characterise these as 'demotic cosmopolitans' who engage in various other forms of 'organic' activism in the neighbourhood. Additionally, they will be seen to articulate the role of such 'community centres' with greater ambivalence more often highlighting pragmatic concerns, such as the provision of Arabic-language and Islamic education rather than viewing the centres as providing 'tactics' (in de Certeau's, 1984, sense of the term) for negotiating a specifically Yemeni identity. The role of Yemen's complicated and contested national politics is also important in understanding why the second generation, and indeed

even these particular community leaders, do not mobilise around or prioritise a single ethno-national Yemeni identity in imaginaries and constructions of 'community'.

5.3 Urban Yemeni Community Leaders and Demotic Cosmopolitans

These community leaders are distinct from the rest of the participants in terms of their region of origin in Yemen, educational background, and motivations for moving to Liverpool. Although they can be considered 'first-generation' having been born and raised in Yemen, I wish to highlight their differing social-cultural capital and educational background in comparison to that of the first-generation who arrived in the post-war period and were employed largely in manual labour, such as the steelworks (cf. Searle, 2010). All of these leaders discussed are male and aged between fifty and seventy. They stated in interviews that they were born and grew up in small Yemeni towns or villages where their families largely depended on agriculture for income. Crucially, however, they later moved to Aden, or Ṣan'ā for a smaller number, for secondary or higher education or employment, with some gaining Masters Degrees in the UK or other EU countries. While Aden and Ṣan'ā differ in many respects, I emphasise that both reflect an urban, cosmopolitan Yemeni milieu. Of these two places, the social history of Aden will be seen to play a prominent role. This is unlike the majority of participants who do not associate themselves with nor have family ties to the urban centres of Aden or Ṣan'ā.[64] Their professional life also differs significantly in that they are/were predominantly employed in 'skilled' positions outside of their 'community work', not arriving as shop-keepers or to work in the industrial towns. They can also in many ways be considered 'activists' in that a lot of their work and efforts are undertaken in a voluntary capacity, being primarily concerned with improving youth education, broader societal representation of

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[64] Several interview participants noted a small number of Adeni families in Liverpool.

Arabs/Yemenis, raising awareness of the current conflict in Yemen, and the local provision of services such as translation/interpretation and assisting in navigating welfare bureaucracy. They also share a broadly secular outlook incorporating elements of 'pan-Arabism' or Arab nationalism(s). Nāṣir (50s, educated in Aden, community leader) highlights this:

> I find myself with a lot of energy and commitment to do what I do in a voluntary capacity…it's a belief that we are contributing back to our community to give them a safer *outward going community*, fantastic facilities to learn. And also, we invite anybody to come and help, we don't ask if you are Muslim, Communist, Arab or non-Arab…*everyone is welcome.* Some ask me 'Why can't I organise trips for women?'. I said we are not a 'women-only' community…Bring your mum, your grandmum, granddad.

At first glance, this group of urban Yemeni community leaders appear to come close to Hannerz' conceptualisation of 'cosmopolitans' characterised by 'a willingness to engage with the Other' (1990: 239), in comparison to 'transnationals' who are characterised by greater 'encapsulation' (ibid., 245). Nonetheless, Hannerz' particular notion of cosmopolitanism has been challenged by scholars such as Werbner (2008: 16) who contest its Eurocentric approach which denies that cosmopolitanism can occur in multiple forms, not only limited to an élite set of jet-setting intellectuals. Fardon (2008) also raises the point that cosmopolitanism understood only as a form of 'transcending' the nation itself belies an element of Eurocentric methodological nationalism: 'Nations did not become diverse only through receiving culturally distinctive immigrants; in a loose sense, all were cosmopolitan at their inception' (ibid., 238). While these community leaders will be seen to emphasise plurality and diversity, they are also very much rooted in the local context, taking part in everyday Liverpool-Yemeni life to varying extents, as well as maintaining strong ties to Yemen – in this sense they are characterised by 'rootedness' both 'here' and

'there', rather than 'rootlessness' (Hannerz, 2006: 7). Nagel and Staeheli's study on British-Arab activists, including a Yemeni respondent from Liverpool, highlights their 'rootedness', noting:

> our participants situate their obligations to the host society within a broader set of commitments and geographical affinities that link 'here' and 'there'. They argue that integration reflects a commitment to participation in the places where they live, but does not require residential mixing, assimilation, or denial of connections to their homeland. (2008: 417)

Similar orientations were articulated by the group of urban Yemeni community leaders discussed here. Additionally, they (ibid., 427) conclude that 'British Arab activists argue that the requirement to integrate in the host society stems from the simple fact that, regardless of their transnational affinities and linkages, Britain is where they live, work, go to school, and raise their families.' This idea of moving towards 'greater cultural integration' was repeated on several occasions by a number of the community leaders, and indeed that these leaders are able to articulate such visions itself marks their positionality as distinct. Nāṣir (50s, born in Yemen, educated in Aden) notes regarding one of the 'community' projects established by this group:

> We tell them [it] is a community organisation trying to enable young people to have a strong identity *plus a strong Britishness* because they live here, that's their country, that's where they end up becoming doctors or shopkeepers.

To further illustrate the differing positionalities between this group and that of other first-generation Yemenis, Ḥāmid (50s, born in Yemen, educated in Ṣan'ā, involved in several community associations and projects) himself notes:

> To be honest, the first wave of Yemenis, they came here, they were illiterate. Most of them worked in the steel industry, the coal industry, they worked in really hard conditions and environments, they did not enhance their education even here when they arrived, and for many years their children were affected because of their parents [who] weren't educated or really interested in education, so they did not encourage their children, *not like me, I came*

from Yemen, and I was very well educated and I came for the purpose of education and this is a barrier for the Yemenis, advancing their education…but lately we did research on the [educational] attainment and we found they [Liverpool-Yemeni youth] are very low attainers due to lack of [English] language [ability] in the family, the help that they don't get from their families, the lack of role models from the community; there is no one, very few, who finished university.

While the notion of 'cosmopolitanism' itself has been the source of much debate, Werbner's (2016, drawing upon Bhabha, 1996) notion of 'vernacular' or 'demotic' cosmopolitanism is useful for this chapter in understanding how both the community leaders and second-generation participants can be described as 'cosmopolitans', albeit with somewhat differing orientations. Indeed, rather than using Western-centric ideas to define who may be considered 'cosmopolitan', it is possible to draw upon ideas of 'tolerance', 'hospitality', and 'openness' present in non-Western cultures to broaden the analytic frame which challenges notions of Muslims in particular (but also other non-Western ethnic/cultural/religious groups) as somehow inherently 'intolerant' or 'closed off'. As Werbner (2016: 239) writes 'cosmopolitanism as an ethical outlook enables us to explore ideas and values that spread beyond national boundaries or little communities, and to recognise the qualities of tolerance and open-mindedness that people beyond the West foster in their own terms.' This group of community leaders comes close to Vertovec and Cohen's (2002: 1) conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism as embodying 'middle-path alternatives between ethnocentric nationalism and particularistic multiculturalism' and thus they advocate for a form of pluralistic multiculturalism which emphasises both 'integration' into British society alongside fostering a 'positive' vision of Yemeni/Arab identities, rather than 'assimilation'. The context of diaspora life means that 'everyday' diasporans also inevitably become 'cosmopolitan' to a certain extent in that bi-culturalism, bi-lingualism, and hybridisation are readily observed and experienced, particularly in

second-generation diasporic life. Indeed, the previous chapter saw various examples of such 'demotic cosmopolitanism', such as when Maḥmūd drew upon the Arab notion of *karāmah* (hospitality) in describing the wedding celebration as open to all local inhabitants, or Munīra's articulations of her and her family's engagement with their white neighbours, the many instances of generous hospitality which I was shown throughout the fieldwork period in invitations to participants' homes and events, as well as the multi-ethnic friendships and other forms of social engagement discussed later in this chapter.

5.4 Dominant Discourses: Arab Nationalism(s) and Community Cohesion

Throughout the interviews and during time spent volunteering at several of the organisations, the commitment of this group of community leaders to a broadly secular vision in establishing and running community centres and events was emphasised, often contrasting with another main Yemeni-founded centre in the city which has a more clearly religious focus. This secular outlook of these actors must be underlined. All emphasised that spaces and events such as the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival and this particular Arabic school had no religious underpinning. This is not to be confused with any anti-religion sentiment, as in indeed several explicitly stated that they are practicing Muslims. Rather, I contend that this outlook reflects a set of personal experiences and orientations which are informed by the cosmopolitan milieu of Yemen's urban centres, as well as the influence of Liverpool's dominant discourses and the national 'Community Cohesion' and 'Prevent' agendas.

While the community leaders described in this chapter may ultimately trace their roots to rural villages outside of Aden and Ṣanʿā, they were notable in discussing their own, sometimes strongly held, positions vis-à-vis Yemeni national politics which emerge out of

these urban milieus. Nonetheless, a common theme was the desire to move away from political divisions and fragmentation rooted in Yemen, some of which are still visible in Liverpool to a certain extent.

Qays (50s, born in Yemen, educated in Aden, community leader) highlights how his own life experiences in Aden have left a lasting impact:

> During the British time in Aden I wasn't in Aden, I came in about '72, so three to four years after the event, so I was familiar with seeing the South Yemen at the time as a country that was trying to do its best for its people, in terms of education and health for all, and that was under the Yemeni Socialist Party. One is to pick up from where the British left and to spread education and health and welfare to the countryside, and there were massive gaps between someone from Aden and somebody the villages of Ḍhāli' or Shabwa and sometimes people forget what the Yemeni Socialist Party did for the South. They did improve education and health and welfare, so I became a big fan or at least familiar with that kind of revolutionary approach.
> […]
> The ideals of the people in charge was a socialist-Marxist approach in line with what was going on in the 60s and 70s with liberation movements from all over the world, from Vietnam to Cuba to Nicaragua and you know, all over the world.

Qays was perhaps the most explicit out of the group in stating his views on Yemeni politics, particularly in regard to the educational and economic level of development he witnessed in Aden, which he attributes to the effort of the Yemeni Socialist Party as compared to elsewhere in Yemen. Instead of emphasising Britain's colonial past as a disruptive and/or destructive force in Yemen, he (and others) place the spotlight on the material development which the independent Republic of South Yemen later saw.[65] Indeed

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[65] It must also be stressed that although Aden was a colonial 'metropole' occupying a strategic position in South-West Arabia, it was nonetheless peripheral, as Mawby (2005: 64) highlights: 'Since its capture by Haines in 1839 the purpose which Aden served within the British imperial system had been ill defined. Its future rarely concerned British strategists'. Mawby (ibid.) also further highlights its peripheral nature noting that 'lines of authority ran from Aden to Bombay to Calcutta and then back to the India Office in London'.

Müller (2015: 266) notes that 'After South Yemen's new constitution was launched in 1970, the early decision to expand the British administrative system all over the country served as a solid base of state building'. In the above extract, Qays refers to colonial rule as 'The British time in Aden' – similar phrasings were used throughout the fieldwork period. This was exemplified by several talks, workshops, events and projects which took place at or in conjunction with the Arabic school established by this group. For example, language such as 'the British occupation of Aden' was explicitly discouraged in the production of a short documentary-film regarding the experiences of British armed forces who had served in Aden, and which was later screened for a Yemeni and non-Yemeni audience. The aim of the film was stated roughly as to celebrate Britain and Yemen's shared history and connections. Additionally, the community leaders' vision for the centre as aiming to foster greater 'integration' into British society while also promoting a 'positive' vision of Yemeni/Arab identity was evidenced by the regular events and workshops organised, such as talks by individuals from higher education institutions to encourage the youth to further their education, visits from the Lord Mayor and other city officials, workshops promoting health for older individuals, engagement with volunteers from local universities in providing GCSE exam support, various events/projects centred around Arab culture such as art and music, as well as workshops aimed at discouraging youth from radicalisation. The Liverpool Arab Arts Festival, discussed further in this chapter, which was established by and has input from several members of this same group of community leaders is perhaps the clearest example of the aim to promote a 'positive' secular vision and representation of Arab culture which de-emphasises what was perceived as the negative impact of de-culturated forms of Islam. This was highlighted in several interviews when a number of the community leaders mentioned the introduction of the *ḥijāb* in the rural village life of their families as occurring due to an unwanted Saudi

influence. Although second-generation participants have somewhat differing orientations from the community leaders regarding religion, the following chapter will explore the role of perceived Saudi antagonisms on religious identities.

While the national/local discourses of 'community' and agendas such as 'Community Cohension' and 'Prevent' will be seen to play a role in the trajectory of the two main Arabic schools, it is first worth exploring the social and political milieu during the end of colonial rule in Aden and the subsequent establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen (PDRSY). Briefly, despite a growing division between 'native' Adenis and non-Adenis who made up the majority of Aden's population towards the end of colonial rule, (Bujra, 1970: 192), Müller demonstrates a change of tides in which the dominant Adeni ruling class 'joined forces' with the larger working-class non-Adeni population in response to British colonial rule, forging a common identity which cut across class boundaries:

> "The urban Adeni" could have been a religious blue-collar worker, one of the first teachers of Yemeni origin teaching in Arabic and English, or an atheist intellectual who brought home new ideas from his studies in Cairo or Damascus. (2015: 204)

The developments in Aden were not isolated however, being influenced by the development of Arab nationalism from the 1950s onward as a reaction to colonialism, as Mawby notes that:

> Just at the moment when the British were beginning to stress the value of their only Middle Eastern colony as a territory from which Britain could continue to exercise its global responsibilities, a doctrine virulently hostile to British imperialism began to flourish. (2005: 9)

In addition, under a British-influenced system of administration and education, Aden had developed an infrastructure allowing higher levels of education at that point unattainable elsewhere in Yemen. This led to higher literacy rates and the large-scale circulation of

printed materials which together 'granted the Adenis access to alternative ways of political organization and enabled them to share their opinions.' (Müller, 2015: 220). While Ṣan'ā in the north may not have experienced the same level and rapidity of development, nor was it a British colony, its urban environment nonetheless contrasts sharply with the smaller, agriculture-dependent environments of Malāḥ and similar towns/villages which were the focus of the previous chapter. Dresch notes that Ṣan'ā' eclipsed Aden as Yemen's largest city due to rapid development during the 1980s, writing:

> What even ten years before had been a Zaydī city became cosmopolitan. Africans, Europeans, Arabs from elsewhere, were all highly visible, and shopkeepers, taxi-drivers, day-labourers had moved in from both Upper and Lower Yemen in enormous numbers. (2000: 176)

It is thus in the context of these milieus which the positionality of these community leaders must be placed. Qays (50s, born in Yemen, educated in Aden, community leader) also highlights his secular outlook which does not reject religion entirely, but rather de-emphasises its role in community associations:

> The centre is *more secular*, and our mission statement is more clear, we don't actually segregate because of religion, *we aren't a religious school*, some of the teachers do [incorporate religion], but that's *part of the culture* to make the children aware, but we are not forcing *ṣalāh* [prayer] on anyone or asking the girls to cover their hair, or this or that, and we will challenge that you know…so people can choose.

As I was unable to gain access to the more religiously-focused Arabic school, it must be emphasised that this chapter explores a specific group of leaders who exist among others.[66] Nonetheless, both schools, attitudes towards the role of religion notwithstanding, share a similar trajectory in that they began as more explicitly 'Yemeni' before moving towards a broader multi-ethnic focus. This is clear from the change in names of these schools which

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[66] Although I was able to interview several individuals who are either involved in or have connections to this school.

previously included a Yemeni element, but now have more generic names. In the case of one school, this change occurred around 2006 according to the schools' founders. I contend that this shift in many ways reflects a confluence of factors: namely, the already-existing orientations of the community leaders in the case of the secular Arabic school who emphasise pan-Arabism over regional fragmentation, the changing demographics of Liverpool which saw an increase in arrivals from Somalia and other areas of the Arab world from the early 2000s onwards, the turbulent political situation in Yemen, and importantly, the national discourses of 'Community Cohension', and Liverpool City Council's local discourse of 'Equality, Diversity, and Integration'. Thus the earlier point that the state can impact the construction of ethnic boundaries in certain contexts is relevant here, but its particular impact is that rather than leading to assertions of narrowly ethnicised boundaries, the 'Community Cohesion' discourses from the 2000s which stress '"equality" at the expense of "difference"' (McLoughlin, 2005c: 56) have instead lead to emphasis on 'diversity' in the Yemeni-led 'community' landscape.

As McLoughlin (2005c: 56) notes, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, 'By the end of the year the New Labour government had articulated a concern for "community cohesion" in a series of its own reports'. While the urban Yemeni community leaders are not 'Muslim leaders' *per se*, McLoughlin's (ibid., 58) point is relevant here that 'since the late 1990s, government has periodically leant unelected Muslim bodies and their leadership public legitimacy, mainly through consultation but sometimes by channelling resources in their direction'. Indeed, the main Yemeni-founded centres (secular and religious) which came to dominate the 'community' institutional landscape from the mid-2000s have variously received funding from the Home Office's 'Prevent Youth' programme and the counter-terrorism 'Building a Stronger Britain Together' programme – a programme which the government website describes as:

The counter-extremism strategy encourages partnership between the government and people involved in projects that counter extremism and build stronger communities.[67][68]

This programme has notably generated controversy, and even led to several authors backing out of Bradford's Literature Festival in 2019 due to it being a source of funding (Wolfe-Robinson, 2019, *The Guardian*).[69] While there has been a blurring of the distinction between the earlier Community Cohesion policies and Prevent (O'Toole et al., 2016: 167, see also O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood, 2012), the Prevent agenda in particular has been criticised for promoting Islamophobia and creating an atmosphere of suspicion as Alam and Husband (2013: 236) note that 'government policies facilitated a discourse and practices that promoted anti-Muslim sentiments among the majority population, and significantly alienated large sections of Britain's Muslim populations.'[70] Nonetheless, that both the secular and religious Yemeni-founded centres have implemented elements of these agendas, and receive funding for their implementation, again requires recognising the importance of both the local and national contexts. Indeed, despite its problematic implications, O'Toole et al. (2016: 165) highlight that the implementation of Prevent has been idiosyncratic across contexts and localities, contesting 'the view that Prevent can be seen straightforwardly as a form of discipline given its contradictory, incoherent, and contested practice.' (ibid., 174). Although this thesis is not an exploration of the specific implications of Community Cohesion and Prevent agendas in

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[67] To protect the anonymity of these organisations, I have not included the direct sources where they are explicitly listed. The information regarding funding is available in the public domain.

[68] UK Government. 2019. *Guidance: Building a Stronger Britain Together*. [Online]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together

[69] Wolfe-Robinson, M. 2019. Six Pull out of Bradford festival over counterextremism funding. *The Guardian*. [Online]. 20 June. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jun/20/six-pull-out-bradford-literature-festival-counter-extremism-funding

[70] O'Toole et al. (2016: 162) note that: 'The Prevent strategy that was unveiled in 2007 in response to the 2005 London bombings was framed as a 'hearts and minds' approach to countering al-Qaeda-inspired domestic terrorism. The provenance of Prevent rests in a broader strategy cumulatively developed since 9/11.'

the Liverpool-Yemeni context, it is important to note the significant impact which these national agendas have had on the consolidation of the main 'community' centres – indeed, it is possible that they were able to grow in scope and eclipse the earlier smaller-scale more fragmented associations by receiving greater funding for projects which coincided with the 'inclusive' rebranding of the schools from the mid-2000s in line with this discourse. This can also be seen on the city-scale, as evidenced by Liverpool City Council's (LCC) recently (2019) launched 'Community Resources Grant' (CRG, previously the 'Community Resources Unit') which is part of its 'Inclusive Growth Plan' (IGP) – the CRG/CRU is a source of funding for the main Yemeni-founded centres which requires that recipients help LCC 'achieve its Inclusive Growth Plan aims'.[71] Priority 3.4 of these aims according to a document produced by LCC (2018: 56) is listed as 'Maintaining community safety and cohesion', with further points such as 'Supporting activities to increase community cohesion and inclusion in neighbourhood' and 'To reduce hate crime and improve community cohesion'.[72]

Given the particular orientations of the community leaders discussed in this chapter as activists who emphasise greater 'integration' into British society though the various centres and projects while also maintaining a 'positive' Yemeni/Arab identity (see discussion of the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival below), I emphasise the confluence of narratives which have resulted in the current 'community' landscape of Liverpool. I also wish to emphasise Nagel and Staeheli's point that 'integration' for this group is not 'assimilation' but more clearly recognition of difference, as they write:

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[71] Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services (LCVS). 2019. *Liverpool City Council Resource Grants.* [Online]. Available from: https://www.lcvs.org.uk/liverpool-city-council-community-resource-grants-now-open/
[72] Liverpool City Council. 2018. *Inclusive Growth Plan: A Strong and Growing City Built on Fairness*. [Online]. Available from: https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/1356877/mayoral-growth-may-2018-a3-spreads.pdf

Integration as conceptualized by our study participants represents a two-way relationship that requires change on the part of both British Arabs and the British majority. In this sense, it is quite different from the version of multiculturalism that has guided public policy toward immigrants and racial minorities in Britain since the early 1970s. (2008: 426)

While these actors do align the respective organisations with the dominant discourses of 'Community Cohesion' in many respects, it is also important to recognise that they too have multiple positioned belongings being at once Yemeni, Aden/Ṣan'ānī, Arab, pan-Arabist, inhabitants of Liverpool, and community leaders. While Prevent in particular has met with strong opposition from Muslim organisations and leaders in various British localities, the more local context of Liverpool may reveal why these agendas and discourses have generally been met without strong opposition.

The projects, workshops, and events which variously deal with inter-generational relations, anti-extremism programmes, health and education programmes, and encouraging wider societal engagement which the community centre I attended organises also accords with O'Toole, DeHanas and Modood's (2012: 382) point that 'Prevent and cohesion are operationally difficult to separate, we found actors nationally and locally expressing scepticism that Prevent and cohesion can be separated.' These perhaps also reveal that Kundnani's (2009: 18) point from a decade earlier still holds in the Liverpool context, in that many local councils used or continue to use Prevent funding for 'community cohesion' or 'community development work'. Kundnani (ibid.) writes 'The manager of a youth work project in the north of England told us that all of the Prevent projects he had seen 'were "bread and butter" youth training, community engagement, consultancy work or advocacy work'.' The type of workshops and events organised by the Arabic school which I attended fall more clearly into this category.

Although Prevent itself remains controversial and contested, this section has emphasised that in the Liverpool-context, it has been incorporated into the main 'community' centres/schools alongside various other 'cohesion'-type activities, albeit with one centre advertising its affiliation more explicitly. Projects such as anti-youth extremism training were portrayed as having a positive influence by both the community leaders, and some second-generation participants. Of course, it is also important to consider that the relatively small number of Yemenis and Muslims overall in Liverpool might contribute to how Prevent has been perceived (or even its general lack of perception). Kundnani (2009: 12) highlights that 'There is a strong correlation between the amount of Prevent funding provided and the number of Muslims in that area.', providing a figure (ibid., 13) for the nineteen local authorities which received the highest amount of Prevent funding in 2008/9- 2010/11 – Liverpool is absent from this list (see also Kundnani, 2009: 14, fig. 4, which shows Liverpool in the lower end of Prevent funding allocation).

Thus this section has emphasised that the particular social capital of these urban Yemeni community leaders alongside their own, often secular, orientations positions them favourably to navigate the dominant discourses and government agendas. The shifts in national policy towards 'Community Cohesion' mean that this particular centre, along with other Yemeni-founded centres which share a similar trajectory (albeit with religion having differing emphases), have come to dominate the 'community' landscape of Liverpool.

While other northern English cities such as Bradford have had a large Pakistani-Muslim presence since the 1960s and thus the history of 'race relations' in such regions has taken its own sited trajectory (McLoughlin, 2006), Liverpool is notably different in that Yemenis were the first 'large' Muslim group to arrive predominantly shortly before or just after the Toxteth riots in 1981 which prompted the establishment of a short-lived and highly

contested 'Race Relations Liaison Committee' under Militant (Belchem, 2014: 268). The

approach of Militant was criticised as being 'colour-blind' within 'a "workerist" ideology

of absolute class solidarity, denying any "divisive" concession to ethnic, sectional or

voluntary groups' (ibid., 267). Nonetheless, Belchem (ibid., 272) notes that from the mid-

1980s, the historically Liverpool-born Black area of the Granby Triangle in L8 has now

become predominantly inhabited by more recently arrived 'Muslim' groups (see also

Uduku, 2003). Indeed, Bunnell (2016: 99-100) highlights that in the wake of the 1981 riots

and the creation of a 'race relations industry' (Brown, 2005: 247), L8's other minority

groups were largely overlooked, and 'By 1997, a few race relations bodies had

disappeared' (ibid.) giving way to a new landscape in which the urban Yemeni leaders

who arrived from the 1980s onwards alongside policy shifts towards from the 2000s have

been seen to be influential. Thus it is in the new context of the post-1981 riots that

Liverpool-Yemeni community building must be situated – being a relatively small,

initially somewhat encapsulated and institutionally 'invisible' group, Liverpool-Yemeni

community leaders from the mid-2000s have in many ways played an important

intermediary role in shaping how the Council interfaces with L8's multi-ethnic Muslim

groups.[73]

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[73] See also Jones' (2015) article on Muslim participation and dimensions of multicultural policy in Leicester which reveals many similarities with the Liverpool context in that 'The new national emphasis on cohesion fitted well with the city's pre-existing emphasis on collaboration between religious groups, but also facilitated a more explicit focus on unity – on "One Leicester"' (ibid., 1981). The timing of the shift towards what Jones' calls 'consultative multiculturalism' (ibid., 1976) from the early 2000s also has parallels in Liverpool, and was similarly 'heavily reliant on the emergence of a system of patron-client politics that saw inner-city development funds being used to co-opt the leaderships of ethnic community associations' (ibid., 1975).

In order to provide services which reach a large section of Liverpool-Yemenis/Arabs and/or Liverpool-Muslims, and to secure funding, community leaders have deliberately disengaged the political turmoil and fragmentation of Yemen's recent past. Indeed, given the conflicted and fragile nature of unified Yemen coupled with the majority of Liverpool-Yemenis having left Yemen before unification, to portray any single organisation as *the* Yemeni 'community centre' would invariably mean also becoming embroiled in arguments over which group can legitimately 'represent' such a turbulent (dis)unity. While the earlier phases of community building evidence 'fission' or 'factionalism' along internal Yemeni lines, the contemporary landscape has now given way to one characterised by 'fusion' – critically, however, this 'fusion' has not taken Yemen as its centre-point due to the aforementioned considerations which hinge on the personal orientations of the community leaders, dominant discourse and sources of funding, as well as Yemen's contested (dis)unity. Instead, the secular organisation has come to embody a discourse of multi-ethnic (or multi-Arab) 'diversity' which emphasises greater 'integration' into British society, while other organisations are based around a shared Muslim identity not limited to any single ethnic group. While, for example, debates on 'transnational political imaginaries' can take place in the Manchester-Pakistani diasporic public sphere (Werbner, 2002a: 252), the political issues at stake within a Yemeni context, in which the 'political imaginaries' of Yemen itself are highly contested, are laden with far greater risk for fragmentation, particularly so under the current circumstances.

To highlight these processes of fusion, attitudes towards language are also revealing in that the Arabic language itself is articulated as a means to de-emphasise local/regional divides. The following quotes from the urban Yemeni community leaders illustrate these points.

Qays:

My accent, because I've moved around Yemen, I don't have a local strong Yemeni accent, *I have a pan-Arab approach to it*, plus I studied Arabic in Yemen and I was very good at it, so if you hear my accent, *it's not as local*…I have almost near Standard Arabic with Yemeni influence, of course, and I kept it because I was trained as an interpreter and had a qualification in the area to a degree level as well, so my Arabic Standard is good written and spoken…not as good as my English [laughs].

Munīf:

Because I was raised in Aden, so my Arabic dialect is Adeni dialect, and still probably very strong

[…]

I think that it was one of the best decisions we made [to focus on Standard Arabic in the school], we said forget about all the curriculum that was either Yemeni, Egyptian, Moroccan, or Syrian because many people could not identify themselves with that curriculum and I chose a curriculum developed in Europe for second-generation Arabs born in Europe, so they can have a common Arabic language.

'Umar (community leader, born in Yemen, educated in Ṣan'ā) similarly emphasises the role of Standard Arabic as a 'unifying' language, albeit with more emphasis on its role within Yemen and its importance for Liverpool-Yemenis:

Most of us have different dialects, in each province we have a different dialect, but the *fuṣḥā* [Classical Arabic] united us.

[…]

Arabic language is very essential for us and our kids as well, it's our identity and belonging, we tend to, you know, we established the school in 2002 when we first applied for funding and it was established and we were encouraged…and then because we feel it is important for us to learn the language, because when they go back [to Yemen] they can't communicate in Arabic and also the language broadens their knowledge and increases their opportunities locally and internationally.[74]

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[74] The reference to funding here likely refers to such bids standing a greater chance of success if such 'community' centres can be seen to have a large reach, i.e. to provide services for all of Liverpool's Arab or Arabic-speaking inhabitants in line with 'Community Cohesion' policies.

The above concerns are also implicated in the emergence of an ethno-national Yemeni 'diasporic public sphere'. Of course, alternative diasporic public spheres not centred around the nation also exist, as Werbner's (2009) and Scharbrodt's (2020) explorations of Muslim diasporic public spheres reveal. While the community centres and associations discussed thus far more clearly reflect the interface between 'community' (the discourse and representation of which has been seen to stress multi-ethnic 'diversity') and state, a diasporic public sphere represents the 'hidden, invisible public arenas' diasporans create and participate in (Werbner, 2009: 20). Appadurai (1996:22-23) also highlights the role of mass media and communications technologies in diasporic public spheres which are often internally diverse and reflect a 'postnational order'. Nonetheless, during the fieldwork period I found little evidence for a robust (ethno-national) Yemeni diasporic public sphere and thus argue that it's non-emergence in Liverpool owes to a confluence of factors, namely: the small size of the Yemeni population in Liverpool, earlier internal fragmentation, the fragile and highly contested context of Yemeni national politics, and the orientations and positionalities of the second generation who are less concerned with debating or mobilising around national Yemeni concerns, and are instead better characterised as 'demotic cosmopolitans'. Additionally, although second-generation participants can be said to evidence the notion of 'co-responsibility' for co-ethnics elsewhere, this was also more clearly articulated in terms of the (extended) family, such as family links to the USA. Thus the final sections of this chapter will explore alternative forms of engagement of the second generation which are perhaps more 'cosmopolitan' and less 'diasporic'.

5.5 Liverpool: 'World in One City'

Before discussing the development and implications of the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival, this section will first examine what I propose as the 'dominant discourse' surrounding ethnic minority 'community' and 'culture' in the Liverpool context which will be seen to be influential. It is first worth noting that this discourse began to increase in prominence particularly in the run up to Liverpool's European Capital of Culture (ECoC) award in 2008, after a long period during which post-war Liverpool had experienced high levels of unemployment and negative media portrayals throughout the Militant-led years of the 1980s. Of course, the development of such a discourse itself is not unique to Liverpool as, for example, McLoughlin (2006) describes a similar trajectory in Bradford. For this reason, I emphasise that Liverpool's dominant discourse reflects (institutional) 'models of neoliberal multiculturalism promulgated around the UK and the EU' which became more prominent in the lead up to and after the ECoC (Bullen, 2016: 111). O'Brien (2010: 119) notes that despite difficulties in creating and implementing 'cultural policy' in Liverpool owing primarily to the legacy of Militant which was reluctant to establish art and cultural programmes as well as severe financial constraints, the notion of Liverpool as a unifying 'signifier' is nonetheless prominent in any discussion of 'Liverpool culture(s)': 'Thus the narrative of Liverpool culture is one grounded in the mythology of place created by the intersection of class and ethnicity found in an Atlantic seaport'.[75] (ibid., 117)

This discourse, as perhaps is clear from the slogan 'World in One City', can be summarily described as centred around the notion of 'unity-in-diversity'. A memorandum by Liverpool City Council from 2004 exemplifies this:

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[75] See also Belchem, for discussion on the failures of multicultural and 'race relations' policies of the 1980s.

The aim for Liverpool is therefore about raising awareness and developing greater understanding in order to break down barriers within and between diverse communities. Approaches taken must be about positively embracing our diversity and promoting equality of opportunities. After all, Liverpool is "The World in One City", European Capital of Culture 2008.[76]

This discourse is less concerned with drawing boundaries between groups, and more clearly orientated towards efforts of 'civic boosterism' and 'city branding' (Boyle, 1997; Bonakdar and Audirac, 2019) which continually assert Liverpool's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural 'legacy' in an attempt to harness it for economic development. In contrast to this, while demotic discourses share much in common with the dominant in that 'Liverpool' as a locality takes centre stage in both, the demotic discourses emphasise organic, multi-ethnic connections and solidarities at the neighbourhood (Toxteth) level which are not mediated by council-funded initiatives, as discussed further in this chapter.

For Baumann (1996: 108), the dominant discourse describes 'communities' as 'a self-evident grouping held together by a unified *culture*.' However, it is difficult to locate a discourse in Liverpool which fixes a Yemeni 'community' along ethnic lines either imposed by the outside or by Liverpool-Yemenis themselves. Instead of beginning with a discourse which fixes a specific (ethnic) group with a reified culture, Liverpool City Council's discourse reifies 'diversity' itself, as Bullen in a study of urban regeneration in a deprived North Liverpool neighbourhood highlights:

Narratives celebrating the city's diversity foregrounded in the ECoC bid and the importance of "community cohesion" promulgated within national and international spheres became central to the work of the BME team. (2016: 109)

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[76] Select Committee on Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions. 2004. *Memorandum by Liverpool City Council.* SOC67. [Online]. Available from: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/45/45we09.htm

And in the memorandum by Liverpool City Council in 2004 which also emphasises 'community cohesion', citing projects such as Black History Month Group:

> The aim of the Group is to celebrate the histories of the African Diaspora in Liverpool…It is intended that this will be achieved by developing an understanding with and between all of Liverpool's different cultural and racial communities, by ensuring that all communities are informed of and welcomed to events.[77]

These 'celebrations of diversity' have remained prominent, reflected in Liverpool City Council's current motto 'Equality, Diversity and Integration', also being evidenced in the dramatic growth of the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival post-2008, and the continued support and promotion of other large-scale 'cultural festivals' throughout the city such as Africa Oyé and Chinese New Year celebrations.

In the absence of a dominant discourse which attempts to fix a 'Yemeni community', it also becomes more difficult to distinguish the dominant from the demotic, especially as both emphasise 'diversity' albeit in different ways, and for different purposes. Thus I propose that in the Liverpool context, the dominant discourse of the local state regarding 'community' and 'culture' is influenced by national concerns of 'cohesion', and is predominantly concerned with 'equality and diversity' (further exemplified by the predominance of language such as 'ethnic minority' and 'BAME' rather than 'Yemeni'), as well as a more local focus on 'boosterism' and the rebranding of Liverpool.[78] The demotic discourse is, as to be expected, much more ambivalent, reflecting the everyday realities of a multi-ethnic neighbourhood and 'demotic cosmopolitanism' as will be seen.

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[77] Select Committee on Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions. 2004. *Memorandum by Liverpool City Council.* SOC67. [Online]. Available from: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/45/45we09.htm
[78] While the community leaders discussed in this chapter emphasise 'diversity' in the positioning of the respective organisations, one of them also mentioned campaigning for the inclusion of 'Yemeni' on census forms, rather than the broader label of 'Arab'.

5.6 Liverpool Arab Arts Festival: From Tactics to Strategy

This section now delineates the history of the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival (LAAF) from a small-scale, local event in its beginnings during the late 1990s to a large, highly publicised city-wide festival, embodying the type of civic boosterism promoted by Liverpool City Council's dominant discourse. Bonakdar and Audirac (2019: 148) note that the emergence of city rebranding is linked to the restructuring of global economic systems: 'The 1990s ascent of financialization….has made city branding and city marketing integral economic development strategies for urban growth and for competitively repositioning the city in global urban hierarchies'. Liverpool from the mid-2000s is a clear example of these processes as the city sought to rebrand itself during the ECoC 2008 after decades of high unemployment, urban deprivation, and a generally unfavourable image of the city. Nonetheless, Platt (2011) has also noted that the rebranding of Liverpool during the ECoC 2008 led to a heightened sense of local identities for many of her participants, thus exemplifying the notion of the 'glocal'.

In this section, by exploring the development and implications of the festival, I argue that the festival's trajectory can be understood in de Certeau's (1984) terms as moving from (everyday) 'tactics' of its founders, to becoming co-opted into (institutional) 'strategies' of civic boosterism and rebranding. LAAF in its current state can be considered an example of what Baumann (1999: 122) describes as 'multicultural parades', typically including events such as 'folk dancing, cultural festivals and ethnic restaurants'. These parades are, according to Baumann (1999: 122) bound up with the notion of 'celebrating diversity' and other such slogans which civic boosterism projects frequently employ, but often producing instead a 'difference "multi"-culturalism' while ignoring the complex forms of relations, or 'multirelational thinking' (ibid., 125) which take place between inhabitants of a multi-cultural city. Indeed, Liverpool's dominant discourse exemplifies this 'difference "multi"-

culturalism'. The role of cultural festivals in processes of locality-production has been examined by Johansson and Kociatkiewicz (2011) who highlight that they primarily function as a means to market and promote city 'distinctiveness'. While the festival is arguably the most visible representation and performance of 'Arab' culture in the city, it is also recognised that such performances are more clearly orientated for 'outside' consumption (at least since the festival's dramatic growth) rather than reflecting the everyday lived realities of the second-generation participants.

Shortly before the official launch of the 2018 festival, I was invited to attend a pre-launch talk by the founders (Yemeni and non-Yemeni) of the festival, who described the initial idea, the challenges they faced in setting up the festival, and how it has grown since. The following are fieldwork notes from this talk to provide a background to the festival, as well as highlighting several themes which echo the dominant discourse.

LAAF 2018 Pre-Launch Talk Notes:

One Yemeni founder noted that a key point in encouraging him to set up such an event was when he learnt that several Yemeni children began expressing disappointment in their 'Arabic-sounding' names due to teasing from their peers at school. Upon learning this, he decided that *Yemeni and Arab culture must become more 'visible' in the city*, and that there should be opportunities for children to connect with their cultural heritage, leading to the creation of a Yemeni 'club' in the early/mid-1990s. This was a small gathering of Yemeni parents who initially used houses as spaces to teach children the Arabic language. In 1998, a small-scale event organised by some members of the same group was advertised as an evening of Arabic food, music, and dance. In 2002, *this 'festival' broadened in scope when it was officially launched in partnership with the Bluecoat.*[79] He spoke about the difficulties faced around this time, predominantly due to 9/11, which led to negative reactions as supporters and *funders believed it would be impossible to publicise such an event* amidst fears of terrorism and negative media coverage of Arabs. He commented how he was determined to make the

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[79] The Bluecoat is one of the 'Big Eight' cultural institutions in the city. (O'Brien, 2010: 124)

festival a success, and in 2002 the festival was successfully launched. The festival was initially a Bluecoat managed event, but eventually became *an independent project led by a largely Arab board*.[80] It was also mentioned that the festival really 'took off' *when Liverpool won the European Capital of Culture award in 2008.*

He also described a point of contention, after a reporter from the Jewish Chronicle allegedly questioned *why the festival was labelled 'Arab' and not the more broadly inclusive 'Middle Eastern'*. The reason given for remaining as the 'Liverpool Arab Arts Festival' was that the festival had already identified itself as promoting Arab arts by this stage, and that a great degree of inclusivity was built into the festival with artists and performers coming from across the Arab League countries.

Cultural festivals such as the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival have been labelled by various scholars (Boyle, 1997; Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004) as part of 'civic boosterism' projects which aim to promote a city and, ultimately, in order to attract investment and accumulate capital. The coincident timing of the festival's establishment with Liverpool winning the ECoC award in 2008 would point to the festival being within the type of urban project which Boyle (1997) terms 'Urban Propaganda Projects'. Given the inception of the festival as a localised grass-roots project which went on to gain funding from Liverpool City Council and Arts Council England, it is somewhat atypical of 'Urban Propaganda Projects' in that it was co-opted into ECoC projects and advertised more widely only after it had already gained some recognition within the city.

During the prelaunch talk, it was mentioned that the festival is a 'typical Liverpool thing' in being both international in its scope while also 'rooted in the community'. These assertions highlight two main points of argument: that a) the dominant discourse of ethnic minority 'communities' in Liverpool reifies diversity by placing these within the

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[80] The members of the board share a similar background to the community leaders discussed in this chapter in having high levels of education and/or being employed in 'skilled' professional positions.

imaginary of Liverpool as a 'World City'– a facet of the city's history further promoted by the Capital of Culture award 2008, and b) that although the festival was established primarily by Yemenis, and continues to assert its 'roots' in the community, participants responses were more ambivalent. Ṭāriq (40s, born in Merseyside, various employment including community work), for example, noted that he would 'go along if the kids were bored on a Saturday' but did not feel it held any particular relevance to everyday Yemeni life in Liverpool. Similarly, Rīm (30s, born in Liverpool, social work) noted:

> For me personally, I've got a big family, so I can't be dealing with another 50 kids on top of that, we just do our own thing. Like at the Arabic Festival, I just popped in because it [Family Day] was there, my daughter didn't even want to go.

Layla and Zahra (20s, both students), although not regularly attending the festival, mentioned how it has impacted 'visibility'. Layla comments:

> I feel like the Yemenis are quite invisible and neglected. If you look up online about Yemeni L8 you won't find much, *maybe only recently with the Arab Arts Festival*, but not much before that, especially since Yemenis have played a big role in shaping L8.

LAAF similarly demonstrates the importance of recognising that while such official celebrations of 'diversity' may enjoy great success or claim 'representativeness', they must also be located in their specific contingent contexts. In this case, its establishment and growth were the result of several factors – most notably the social capital and particular positionalities of its founders, Liverpool's ECoC award, and its overall success in the city. Its relevance for many second-generation participants was limited.[81] Admittedly, LAAF does not advertise itself as representative of Liverpool-Yemeni 'culture' or 'community',

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[81] See Boland (2010) for a discussion on how the European Capital of Culture Award 2008 was not felt as necessarily benefitting much of the city's working-class populations. He (ibid., 640) notes: 'Although several events were free, the real beneficiaries were salaried groups able to enjoy the cultural spectacle on offer, while the residents of impoverished communities faced the uncomfortable reality of everyday life'.

but a closer examination nonetheless reveals how its 'roots in the community' are emphasised despite these 'roots' belonging to a very specific, and not necessarily representative, group. Of course, the festival is a success on its own terms, and is celebrated as a positive achievement by its founders who emphasise its ability to provide the younger generations with opportunities to engage with their Arab 'roots' through artistic projects. Despite its visibility, the festival exists outside of the largely hidden world of the (interdomestic) aesthetic diaspora discussed in the previous chapter.

Although LAAF began as a Yemeni 'club', it has been seen that Liverpool's dominant discourse of 'World in One City' meant that the festival was co-opted and came to reflect this. Additionally, the festival itself can also be read as an antagonism against which religious leaders in the city assert its non-representativeness – this was exemplified by the community leaders noting how certain sections of the Liverpool-Yemeni population circulated leaflets highlighting the festival's *ḥarām* nature due to dancing, the mixing of men and women and so on. Finally, in the language of de Certeau's (1984) institutional strategies and everyday tactics, the co-opting of such festivals can also be understood as part of *strategic* locality-production which has little in common with the everyday, demotic *tactics*. Indeed, the festival's initially limited, localised scope can be read as 'tactics' of its founding group in (re)creating an aesthetically Arab space of 'fun' divorced from conservative religious spaces (Werbner, 1996). Nonetheless, and perhaps due to its very cosmopolitan (and non-religious) outlook which incorporates cultural and artistic forms from across the Arab world, such a space was more readily co-opted as a 'sanitised' representation of Arab culture rather than evolving as part of an (organic) 'lived-in cultural world' (Werbner, 1996: 54; 2009). The mixed reactions of second-generation participants (or more generally, the lack of reaction) to the festival also further emphasises the point that diasporas are internally heterogeneous, and that such public events and institutional

fictions of 'community' are also characterised by and become embedded in particular, situated forms of power-relations.

5.7 Long Distance Nationalism or British Activism?

This section explores a local campaign group which was formed in response to the ongoing conflict in Yemen since 2016, and more recently, the UK government's sale of arms to Saudi Arabia (see Chapter 3 for an overview of the crisis). At least one community leader was a proponent of its formation and is active in its running, with several others having some degree of involvement. It was also a point of contestation in several interviews. Groups which 'leverage transnational communities to participate in homeland politics' (Lyons and Mandaville, 2010: 127) have been termed an 'ethnic lobby' or ethnic 'interest groups', but this section will discuss how this group is perhaps better conceived of as a local, British grassroots campaign group rather than a form of transnational (diasporic) politics. The campaigning takes the form of vigils held every few months with several local MPs regularly attending, occasional seminars including a moderately large-scale seminar which a variety of notable speakers attended in 2018, and various fundraising campaigns such as raising money for a hospital in Ṣan'ā. Since its formation and considerable growth, a new group with similar aims but slightly different scope has also recently been created. While the two are still closely affiliated 'sister' groups, they operate and co-operate in somewhat different spheres. The earlier group continues to organise vigils and local talks, retaining more of its origins as a local grassroots campaign group, while the newer group, being affiliated with the Labour Party, makes use of the more 'official' political channels to enact change. By engaging with local political actors to establish such a group under the umbrella of an existing political party, it becomes possible to engage in a more officially sanctioned form of politics. For example, in May

2019 a meeting was held with the Minister of Information for Yemen, the Yemeni Ambassador to the UK, and a number of UK MPs and Yemeni government delegates. The group is also expected to take part in the Labour Party's annual conference in 2019.

Both groups, while operating in different spheres, share the common aim of advocating for peace in Yemen and frame the conflict as a humanitarian crisis. It is important to note that neither group aligns itself with or condones the actions of the conflicting parties currently operating in Yemen, namely the Yemeni government and the Ḥūthī armed movement. By avoiding becoming embroiled in the politics and divisions of the conflict as seen from within a Yemeni context, and by having an explicit focus on 'peace' while emphasising the devastating effects of war, the two groups are able to generate a more receptive response from among local political actors as they are not required to endorse or criticise the existing factions in Yemen. Additionally, it was notable during the vigils and events I attended that the majority of attendees were not Yemeni or Arab.

Turner (2010: 100) notes that members of a diaspora often become perceived as 'tolerant, democratic cosmopolitans that can help put an end to violent identity politics'. In this sense, these groups are an example of 'long-distance nationalism' in which migrants contribute to peacemaking processes in the 'homeland'. As they are focused towards enacting change in Yemen by primarily putting pressure on the UK government, these groups are less clearly 'transnational' in that they do not represent (direct) participation in 'homeland' politics, nor can they be considered as representing a diasporic public sphere. As they are not primarily Yemeni spaces, and given the explicitly non-factional stance, these groups do not present a 'public sphere as an arena of conflict, argument and imaginative creativity' (Werbner, 2002a: 252) which characterises a diasporic public

sphere. For Werbner, such internal conflict and lively debate are possible in a diasporic public sphere due to their not 'having direct impact on world affairs' (ibid., 256).

Thus while the two are political campaign groups led by Yemenis with elements of long-distance nationalism, I argue that they are better understood as 'British' grassroots campaign groups rather than 'diasporic' or 'transnational' in the sense that the groups' efforts in the political sphere are more focused on putting pressure on the UK to cease its arms trade with Saudi Arabia and to raise awareness of the situation, rather than engaging directly with Yemeni national politics. Very few participants had connections to these groups, with some also noting that they did not participate, contesting its orientation. Nonetheless, these spaces were not arenas for debate, but have a pre-defined political stance.

The lack of a diasporic public sphere and the primacy of the family network shares many similarities with the conclusions of Alunni's (2019) study on the Libyan diaspora. She concludes:

> belonging to Libya is primarily conceived as the result of deeply entrenched kinship relations developed in the family and semi-private diasporic spaces
>
> […]
>
> Political and ideological divisions in the diaspora together with the regime's policies at home and persecutions abroad were overall detrimental to the establishment of an all-Libyan diasporic public space. (ibid., 2019: 257-258)

The example of the Liverpool-Yemeni and the British-Libyan diasporas require being attentive to the context 'back home'. In both cases, the extremely unstable and conflicted national contexts coupled with the second generation's relatively apolitical stance mean 'national belonging' in the diaspora is not reflected in a diasporic public sphere of open

engagement. This does not mean, however, that ethnicity is absent or unimportant, but rather that the contexts in which it matters are limited largely to the interdomestic sphere (see Werbner, 1990).

The following section now discusses second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis' narrations of their experiences at various Arabic schools and centres during the earlier, more fragmented phase of 'community' building. Notably, participants highlighted what they felt as inadequate education regarding what being 'Yemeni' meant and how to be 'Muslim', further revealing a generational divide. While the earlier generation are portrayed as more encapsulated, reproducing internal Yemeni divides, the second generation articulate and take part in alternative forms of engagement in the neighbourhood which emphasise L8's 'multi-ethnic' character, and which are not mediated by 'national' or 'civic' discourses/initiatives/agendas, but instead demonstrate examples of 'demotic cosmopolitanism'. In this way, the construction and performance of Yemeni identities as discussed in the previous chapter often looks towards the older generation as a source of 'Yemeni' authority, but nonetheless the lack of specifically Yemeni spaces outside of the home means the second generation find new, often hybridised, ways of engaging and negotiating their multiple positioned belongings. The role of Islam in providing an alternative imaginary of 'community' in many ways connected, but not limited, to Yemeni (family) networks will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.8 Demotic Discourses and Grassroots Engagement

It will now be useful to examine the second generations' more demotic articulations of 'community' and their experiences with various community associations. As the majority of participants in this study are over the age of thirty, their experiences reflect the earlier

phase of community building which saw various smaller-scale Arabic schools, including the precusors to those which later became consolidated as the main schools discussed in this chapter. Most participants noted that they attended various Arabic schools growing up, without making a strong distinction between them. Owing to their small size, fragmented nature, and limited resources, these schools/centres which were set up during the early-mid 1990s onwards have not provided to any great extent 'tactical capacities' for second-generation participants to negotiate their multiple identities. Instead, participants more frequently noted the lack of education regarding Yemen's history, and the lack of easily-accessible Islamic education.

Munīra (30s, Yemeni, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) comments that although the school she attended helped her learn the language, she would have benefitted from a more holistic approach to studying Islam.

> I attended an Arabic School and an afterschool Arabic class in a school. It was just purely to learn *alif-bā*, the alphabet, reciting the Qur'an. I remember bits of Islam from it, but I sort of turned off when it came to those classes, I didn't learn any Islam in Arabic school. That's what affected me most of my life, I really needed the Islamic and spiritual aspects *to help strengthen my identity*, but instead I was being taught this language in quite a 'bitty' way, it didn't connect to anything to do with my life outside. Having the religious element would have made sense of a lot of stuff that was going on at home, but the Arabic language…my parents still speak to me in Arabic, but I answer in English.

She further highlights 'fission' or factionalism along Yemen's North/South divide being primarily (re)produced by the older generation, but contests its importance in the Liverpool context, instead highlighting how Scouse identities can be stigmatised in the UK:

> I didn't understand the whole North/South divide when I was younger and didn't feel it. My parents' friends would all be from the North…most Liverpool-Yemenis are from the North, *but*

it's not until you start hearing about marriages that can't go ahead because of the North/South divide. I remember the first comment that was made to me: 'You don't like look someone from Malāḥ?' and then I realised that there's a…it's almost like you're looked down upon for being from the North [of Yemen] which is so mad *because we're in Liverpool now and you feel that for being from Liverpool too, like when you go to London*, you do feel that. And we do stereotype ourselves too, like this is what people from the South are like, this is what people from the North are like. And then so I'd hear these things first-hand *but I'm not too bothered. It's OK for me, but for the older generations there's still those real grudges.*[82]

Layla (20s, born in Yemen, raised in Liverpool, student) mentions that she switched between various schools, but did not feel that they strengthened any sense of Yemeni identity:

From a young age I went from one centre, and then to another school, and then to the mosque. I only went to study language and Qur'an. *There wasn't nothing there about teaching us who we are*. I only found out Yemenis were among the most famous sailors in the UK two years ago.

Aḥmad (30s, born in Liverpool, works in education) highlights the differing orientation of two Arabic schools, the first of which he attended as a child:

It was totally the same as in Yemen, so they had *tarbiyya Islāmiyya* [Islamic education], which involved Quran and *fiqh*, understanding Qur'an and *sīra* and *tajwīd*, how to read, everything. So there was like citizenship and humanities education which was more like propaganda about the glories of the Yemen and the Arabs.

While noting regarding another centre that:

It was established to learn Qur'an. *They're more interested in ensuring that the youth don't lose their culture and reinforce that*, it's a nuanced difference but there is a difference.

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[82] It is also important to note that this *political* dis-unity does not mean that the category of 'Yemeni' itself is contested – indeed, the social imaginary of a unified Yemen despite this disunity is pervasive as Müller (2015: 188) notes: 'before unification, the leaders of both Yemens always considered the North and South as *shaṭrayn* – as two halves of one country that were supposed to unite one day'.

Observations at the Arabic school and a weekly 'community' evening also revealed that while these organisations may draw upon certain representations or fictions of (multi-ethnic) 'community' when interfacing with the local state, they are experienced somewhat differently on a demotic level – primarily as an extension of the interdomestic sphere. For example, Yemenis who attended the Arabic school were often known to each other via family ties or due to living in proximity, in comparison to other non-Yemeni Arabs or Arabic speakers who would travel from further out. Additionally, the weekly gathering was more often attended by clusters of Yemeni families – usually first-generation Yemeni parents, a number of older first-generation individuals, and very few second-generation adults. In interviews, both the secular and religious schools/centres were emphasised as being 'inclusive' and not narrowly 'Yemeni'. This itself was met with ambivalence, as second-generation participants have noted the lack of tactical capacities provided by the earlier institutions established by the first-generation in negotiating their Yemeni identities, while at the same time also speaking positively of inclusivity and diversity. For example, Rīm (30s, born in Liverpool, social work) frames the different orientations of the secular/religious Arabic centres in terms of the North/South divide in Yemen, while nonetheless noting that both are 'inclusive':

> They all [the Arabic schools] have debates but you know what it is*, they're divided North and South, like all the Adenis will be like 'no we don't want that'*. But they're not just Yemeni kids, it's all Arab kids.

In contrast to the dominant discourse of Liverpool which I argue promotes a sense of 'difference "multi"-culturalism' (Baumann: 1992: 125, see also Bullen, 2016), the everyday grassroots engagement of the second-generation participants was more often directed towards Toxteth as a multi-ethnic locality in which 'diversity' is a facet of everyday life, rather than something to be 'promoted'. Munīra's quotes from the previous chapter spoke of the organic connections between her family and multi-ethnic neighbours,

while other participants frequently mentioned that they enjoyed diverse friendship circles. Although such examples were most often spoken of in positive terms, the demotic can also reveal conflict and hostility, such as Aḥmad's quote which revealed his struggle of maintaining two (Scouse and Yemeni) identities growing up, and racist attacks on his family's property.

Throughout the fieldwork period, I also attended various events and activities organised or attended by participants in the neighbourhood. These included a series of local poetry evenings organised by Layla with poets from various ethnic backgrounds. One of these evenings was focused on the attendees producing poetry recalling experiences of living and/or growing up in L8. Another example was an Arabic reading club in Toxteth, set up by Maḥmūd with the aim of helping Arabs and (non-Arab) Arabic-learners enjoy Arabic literature. I was also invited by Munīra to help out at community gardens in Toxteth run by a group of volunteers, Yemeni and non-Yemeni. At one point, the gardens invited a family of Palestinian farmers to share their expertise and the group eventually opened a 'community' café. In addition, many of the participants have been or are involved in various grassroots initiatives focused towards providing services to elderly Yemenis or Muslims in the city, such as Rīm discussing her experiences in providing meals to the older generation, or Aḥmad and Ṭāriq's involvement in various 'community', Yemeni and non-Yemeni, projects such as one which aimed to strengthen inter-generational relationships. The lack of a diasporic public sphere and Yemen's turbulent political sphere mean the 'nation' remains a peripheral point of reference beyond the family, but second-generation participants are not 'encapsulated' – instead, broader forms of engagement in the multi-ethnic locality of Toxteth and beyond were emphasised. Often, these forms of grassroots engagement were motivated by a sense of Muslim 'communities of co-

responsibility' as discussed in the following chapter, but this section has shown that they are not limited to Muslim spaces, also revealing a strong sense of attachment to the local neighbourhood as an arena in which demotic multi-ethnic and multi-faith friendships, solidarities, and connections can occur.

The following quote from Munīra also reveals the importance of this multi-ethnic context in that everyday demotic interactions at the neighbourhooud level played a significant role in the changing dynamics of performances of Muslim identities in her family's area:

> I didn't learn how to pray in Arabic school or anything. And then, so I was still in school, and I remember the Somali community coming in because they arrived a bit later, but they came over with their religion and the girls came in with *ḥijābs* on, and one of the older boys had a beard and that was in the heart of a white area of L8…and they just came in, so even my mum she didn't used to wear the scarf when she first came over. They dressed like Western people, and then slowly my mum would put the *ḥijāb* on, but these came over like, flaunting their Islam, so even though Islam came into this part of L8 through the Somali community so to speak, it was too quick, it was too much with no explanation. My parents had already started praying by then, but we were still quite free to dress how we wanted and I'd cover more as I grew but not the hair, but when the Somali girls came it was like 'OK, you need to get a scarf on'. The pressure was from them even though they didn't say anything, it was because my parents would look at these Somali families and think these young ones who've just come in are all wearing *ḥijāb* but our kids…there were a few Yemenis earlier on, Malāhis as well, who wore the scarf, but we didn't see them that much. But the Somalis, visually, my parents would see them every single day, so every day it was a reminder. But the Malāhi girls, we didn't see them often enough [for it to be a pressure].

Thus for second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis, the language of organic hybridisation alongside notions of 'demotic cosmopolitanism' best captures these demotic discourses and lived experiences in that while 'Yemeniness' remains important in certain contexts, articulations and examples of outward-facing broader societal engagement are rarely centred around any single ethnic Yemeni 'community' but instead emphasise 'organic'

diversity in L8. The quote above also highlights that inter-relations between migrant groups and the confluence of these journeys can also be an important factor which should not be overlooked at the expense of a purely national focus. This chapter has focused on non-religious imaginaries of 'community', delineating why a Yemeni diasporic public sphere has not emerged and the alternative ways in which Liverpool-Yemenis engage in the neighbourhood, but it will be seen in the following chapter that Islam also plays an important role.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the research question 'What is the story of Yemeni-led 'community building' in Liverpool, and how does this reflect imaginaries of an ethno-national Yemeni 'community'?' By delineating the story of Yemeni-led 'community' building, it has been possible to trace the trajectory of an earlier phase during which community associations had a more clearly ethno-national Yemeni focus, to the contemporary landscape which has moved towards a greater emphasis on multi-ethnic 'diversity' in Liverpool. The reasons behind this shift have been seen to be the result of multiple, interlinking factors. As the particular group of urban Yemeni community leaders arrived in the post-1981 Toxteth riots period, which saw demographic shifts in the L8 region, and as the main Yemeni-founded community associations were consolidated after this point, the Militant-led council's highly contested 'race relations' policies appear to have had little impact on or concern with the earlier phases of Liverpool-Yemeni community building. It has been seen that Yemenis are almost entirely absent in the literature which examines this period, pointing towards a more encapsulated, institutionally 'invisible' group. Instead, turning to the 'national' cornerstone of the

multicultural triangle, this chapter has highlighted that developments in national policy from the 2000s, particularly 'Community Cohesion' and 'Prevent', as well as the rebranding of 'cosmopolitan' Liverpool amidst efforts of civic boosterism, have played an important role in shaping these contemporary fictions of 'community'.

A key argument of this chapter has been that despite Yemeni community leaders playing a significant role in shaping the 'community' landscape of L8 and also acting as official 'representatives' of Liverpool's multi-ethnic Muslim and Middle Eastern groups when interfacing with the council and funding bodies, neither the community leaders themselves nor the second-generation participants organise or mobilise around any single ethno-national Yemeni identity. Attention has been paid to the particular positionalities and social capital of these leaders in order to gain a clearer view of how they are favourably positioned to navigate the dominant discourses and secure sources of funding. Notably, this dominant discourse has been discussed as not fixing 'Yemenis' as a single community, but instead employs a form of 'difference' multi-culturalism which more often speaks simply in terms of 'ethnic minorities' and 'diversity'. It has also been noted that these urban Yemeni community leaders are not necessarily 'cosmopolitan élites', but are perhaps better characterised as activists who emphasise a conceptualisation of 'integration' into multicultural British society which does not mean rejecting an Arab/Yemeni/Muslim identity. The impact of Yemen's highly conflicted national politics in the post-unification period has also been highlighted as a further cause for lack of such mobilisation. However, this is not to say that second-generation participants lack a sense of national belonging – indeed the previous chapter discussed how imaginaries of Yemen are (re)produced, but crucially, this chapter has shown that these do not form the basis of an imagined 'community' or mobilisation in the context of Liverpool.

The lack of a robust ethno-national Yemeni diasporic public sphere in Liverpool has also been discussed. I contend that the reasons behind its non-emergence require looking at the turbulent political context of Yemen, as well as the orientations of the second generation who are largely not invested in debates regarding national Yemeni politics, but instead are positioned as 'demotic cosmopolitans'. Both the urban Yemeni community leaders and second-generation participants emphasised the need to move beyond regionalised disputes and factionalism rooted in Yemen. Distancing themselves from such fragmentation, this chapter has also shown that second-generation participants are not 'encapsulated' or limited only to the family networks discussed in the previous chapter, but also take part in various forms of grassroots engagement centred in the neighbourhood which emphasise multi-ethnic connections and diverse friendship circles over an ethno-national Yemeni 'community'.

Thus while the 'nation' (both 'here' and 'there') remains important in understanding how dominant discourses and national contexts and policy can impact the trajectory of 'community' building, it is also important to recognise that these fictions of 'community' are sited in a particular context and produced according to particular sets of power relations. This being the case, this chapter also portrayed a more demotic account of how, despite the dominant discourse of 'diversity' and 'cohesion', these 'community' spaces are more often accessed in such a way that can be considered an extension of the interdomestic sphere. Not being limited only to the interdomestic sphere, however, the second generation also 'take part' in the neighbourhood revealing how 'everyday multiculturalism' (Werbner, 2013b) can lead to forms of engagement which are not necessarily mediated by the nation or local state. Experiences of racism, exclusion, and

marginalisation, all often bound-up with or (re)produced by national ideologies and discourses, must be not be overlooked; however, this chapter has emphasised shared identities across difference, i.e. the neighbourhood-based identity of 'inhabitant of multi-ethnic L8', which are produced through organic, demotic interactions and experiences rather than being produced according to the dominant discourse's reification of 'diversity'. These shared, 'demotic cosmopolitan' identities can be a source of active engagement, participation, and solidarity. The next chapter now discusses how Yemeni Islam has 'travelled' to and become institutionalised in Liverpool, and how religious identities are articulated alongside or against ethno-national Yemeni identities, while also considering the role of Islam in providing alternative imaginaries of 'community'.

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Chapter 6   Travelling Islam: 'Roots' and 'Routes'

6.1 Introduction

This chapter now addresses the question 'What is the role of Islam in the construction and performance of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni identities?'. Necessarily, this question cannot be adequately addressed without consideration of several interlinking elements. Ethnicity, nation, migration, and (trans)locality are all implicated in and interrelate with 'travelling' Islam in the diaspora (see Mandaville, 2001; Knott, 2010; McLoughlin, 2010, for 'travelling religion'). The previous two chapters have advanced two main arguments, i.e. that a) ethnicised Yemeni identities and 'Yemeniness' retain most relevance and are most salient in the translocal family network, and that b) second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis do not routinely imagine nor participate in any single 'community' centered around Yemen as a modern nation state. Both of these points have noted that while dominant discourses, ideologies, and agendas and political contexts of the nation (UK and Yemen) do exert influence, in the everyday demotic articulations and performances of identity the (trans)local is often more salient than the nation. Sometimes these identities are articulated consciously 'against' the nation such as in productions of oppositional Scouse identities, and in other contexts, such as the more encapsulated world of the interdomestic sphere, the specific localities of Malāḥ and other Yemeni regions are more salient than reference to the nation state. Nonetheless, these points also remind us that localities and their associated identities are produced relationally, embedded in complex webs of historically situated power relations – thus the local (and 'local identities') must be considered alongside the broader national, and global, contexts.

As the previous chapters have proceeded with a broadening scale of reference, i.e. from ethnicity and its cognates to 'community' and its relation to the nation, this chapter now turns towards religion as the final corner of the multicultural triangle. It explores a further element of the 'diasporic tension' expressed in terms of 'roots' and 'routes' in that Muslim identities 'rooted' in 'ethnic'/territorialised Islam may nonetheless forge new 'routes' in the diaspora as it travels, expanding beyond the family network, and possibly becoming articulated in de-culturated/de-territorialised/globalising terms. Thus, Islam as a universalising religion presents a further and important element to the discussion of diasporic identities in that it can both reinforce and transcend 'ethnicity' and 'nation'. On the one hand, Islam in the diaspora can be experienced and articulated as closely bound up with ethnicity and (trans)locality, i.e. through its presence and transmission in family networks, translocal connections to the 'homeland' and institutions which are organised around a certain ethnic group. However, McLoughlin (2005a: 538, citing Knott 1992: 12) points out the limitations of viewing religion as merely a subset of ethnicity in the globalising age where 'in the diaspora, many second- and third-generation youth are disentangling what they see as "universals of religion" from the "localised custom" they associate with their parents' and grandparents' homelands' (McLoughlin, 2005a: 541). This disentanglement has led to what some scholars have termed 'de-culturated' or 'de-ethnicised' Islam' (see Roy, 2004; 2013; Bendixsen, 2013; DeHanas, 2013a) which in some cases provides a powerful sense of belonging especially for those who are increasingly at distance from the 'homeland'. As McLoughlin (2010: 224) writes, while 'religions indigenize and often reinforce territorial identifications, it is the ability to trump such processes with extraterritorial imaginings which is both especially salient and peculiarly well enabled in a globalizing world'.

This 'de-culturated' Islam has also been framed in terms of 'de-territorialisation' in contrast to the more homeland-orientated (or 'territorialised') Islam of the earlier generations. Such considerations also form part of a broader debate concerning whether religion can in some contexts accurately be considered a type of 'de-territorialised diaspora' (Cohen, 2008: 18). Nonetheless, I have preferred to use the term 'de-culturated' over 'de-territorialised' to emphasise that although imaginaries such as the global *umma* may be articulated in de-territorialised terms, the study of Islam in the everyday means studying its sited, local context as well as the sited contexts from which it has travelled. Bauman's (1973) theory of 'culture as praxis' highlights that no human activity or practice exists outside of 'culture', and in this way there is a need to be mindful of the distinction between 'discourse/ideology' and how this is reflected in embodied, lived practice. Indeed, although Islam became widely territorialised after its spread from the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century and saw many subsequent fractures, its universalising core and capacity means that it is simultaneously territorialising *and* de- (or re-)territorializing (McLoughlin, 2005a, 2010). While the previous chapter discussed the ambivalences and disjunctures in imagining 'community' along Yemeni national lines, the introduction of Islam to this discussion adds a further dynamic. That is to say, while modern nation states do employ a symbolic language of 'imagined communities', the symbolic, travelling, and universalising language of Islam and its religious imaginary are not completely analogous to that of a nation state. McLoughlin (2010: 227) highlights that despite the pluralisation and internal fractures within Islam, 'Travelling scholars, Sufis and pilgrims integrated diverse populations into shared universes of meaning across tribal, agrarian and urban societies'.

As Chapter 2 stated, 'Islam' in this thesis is understood in Asad's (1986a) terms as a historically sited and internally heterogeneous discursive and practical field. Similar to previous chapters which, drawing upon Brown's (2005) work, envision 'Liverpool' as a unifying signifier, this chapter thus agrees with Mandaville's view that 'Islam can be most usefully viewed as a *master signifier'* (Mandaville, 2001: 55 drawing upon Sayyid, 1997, italics original) under which this discursive field takes place. This view is particularly useful in the study of everyday Islam, as it recognises that while individual Muslims may hold differing views, beliefs, practices and relationships with Islam, the vast majority nonetheless 'see themselves as adhering very firmly to a single Islam' (ibid.). Nonetheless, more recent developments in the debate of the anthropology of Islam (e.g. Mahmood, 2005; Schielke, 2015; Schielke and Debevec, 2012) have highlighted the need to explore how 'grand schemes' such as religion are enacted, embodied and performed in the everyday. Indeed, the very notion of 'religion' has become a contested category within anthropology due to the tensions between 'the complex duality of religion as an everyday practice and a normative doctrine' (Schielke and Debevec, 2012: 1; Asad, 1993).[83] In this way, performativity theory is useful as a means to explore how a highly theorised understanding of Islam as a discursive field is lived and articulated. Schielke and Debevec (2012: 2) highlight this, noting that grand schemes are in important in the everyday precisely because of 'their being posited above and outside the struggles and manifold paths of everyday life' and that their employment in the everyday 'is only possible through the actual little practices of evoking authority, searching guidance, exercising power –

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[83] Asad (1993), rejecting Geertz's (1966) conceptualisation of religion, argues convincingly that a 'transhistorical definition of religion' (Asad, 1993: 30) as a category is, in fact, untenable. He writes: From this it does not follow that the meanings of religious practices and utterances are to be sought in social phenomena, but only that their possibility and their authoritative status are to be explained as products of historically distinctive disciplines and forces. The anthropological student of *particular* religions should therefore begin from this point, in a sense unpacking the comprehensive concept which he or she translates as "religion" into heterogeneous elements according to its historical character.' (ibid. 54).

practices that are always also informed by the lifeworld they are embedded in' (ibid.). This also highlights that the focus here is on everyday Muslim subjectivities, rather than ascribing to individuals any kind of essentialising 'Islam'. With the emphasis on multiple (everyday) Muslim subjectivities, this chapter also draws upon Mandaville's (2001) notion of the politics of everyday identities in translocal space. In this understanding:

> The ontological dimension of the political is related to one's assertion of a particular identity because that assertion is, in effect, a claim to 'be' – to exist according to one's construction of a particular identity – and, furthermore, to have that existence recognised by the other. (Mandaville, 2001: 10).

These identities and multiple positionings are constructed in relation to a host of local and global concerns, as well as being articulated against several antagonisms, and therefore, in Mandaville's terms, acquire a political dimension. Alongside individual articulations of Muslim identity, this chapter will also consider how the multi-ethnic character of Toxteth has shaped the notion of a Muslim 'community of co-responsibility' (Werbner, 2002a: 252).

The purpose of this chapter is, then, a) to examine how Yemeni forms of Islam have 'travelled' and become embedded in the landscape of Islam in contemporary Liverpool, and b) to explore how (second-generation) Liverpool-Yemeni-Muslims narrate and perform Islam and Muslim identities vis-à-vis their other multiple (i.e. Yemeni, Scouse, Arab, British) positioned belongings. Although fieldwork took place in several of the city's Muslim institutions, this chapter does not examine the specific practices, management or day-to-day affairs of individual mosques and institutions, nor does this chapter prioritise accounts of religious leaders.[84] Instead, these institutions are

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[84] Although the research prioritises 'everyday' accounts from participants, I did attempt to arrange interviews with number of imams and religious leaders. Several declined to participate in interviews,

foregrounded as spaces which represent how travelling (Yemeni) Islam has become institutionalised in Liverpool and, on a practical level, as spaces in which it was possible to make acquaintance with potential participants. Therefore, it is the overall landscape and texture of Islam in Liverpool as well as the everyday articulations/performances which are prioritised.

This chapter begins with a discussion of several main currents which shape Islam in Yemen to better contextualise the subsequent sections which explore how these forms of Islam have travelled to the Liverpool context, becoming re-shaped and re-negotiated along the way. This is important as it highlights that although 'British-Muslim' is a useful category when considering, e.g., the extent to which 'Muslim' has become 'a primary public identity and form of political mobilisation' (Birt, 2009: 215), or considerations of state policy vis-à-vis Muslims (see Abbas, 2005; Birt, 2005), it is equally as important to locate the manifestations of Islam in Britain in their historical, locally-sited contexts of migration. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, ethnicised (Yemeni/Malāḥi) and hybridised (Scouse-Yemeni) identities and their performances remain an important part of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni everyday life. While Muslim identities may be prioritised and narrated in de-culturated terms in certain contexts, they are nonetheless

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stating their inability to meaningfully discuss topics concerning everyday Liverpool-Yemeni life. This was either due to their not being Yemeni, and therefore at a distance from Liverpool-Yemeni social networks (in comparison to the community leaders of the previous chapter who are embedded in a number of interpersonal Liverpool-Yemeni networks), or in the case of one Yemeni imam, due to his short amount of time spent in Liverpool. However, I was invited to attend the mosques during prayers or other events after brief discussions with the imams/leaders/members of the mosque boards. It is also possible that this reluctance was in part due to my positionality as a non-Muslim researcher, although this was not explicitly given as a reason (see e.g. Dessing, 2013 for a discussion of similar issues in gaining access to religious spaces). I was able to interview a board member of one mosque, who preferred to give institutional histories which, while valuable in providing context, do not necessarily add to the discussion of everyday (Liverpool-Yemeni) Muslim identities. Nevertheless, a study which takes a more institutionally-based approach to Islam in Liverpool would be complementary to this thesis. Furthermore, several non-Yemeni Muslim participants' voices are also included in this chapter to better accentuate how Muslim identities in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood compete with, conflict with, or complement ethnicised/hybridised identities.

lived and experienced in locally (or 'glocally') constructed contexts. Indeed, as the title of the thesis 'Yemeni, Muslim, and Scouse' highlights multiple, interlinking identities and positioned belongings, this chapter does not assume that 'Muslim identities' exist in isolation, nor that belonging to a Yemeni diaspora precludes participation in a transnational 'Muslim diaspora'. This recalls Werbner's (2002a, 2002b) notion of the 'chaorder' characteristic of diasporas, in that 'What is subsumed under a single identity are a multiplicity of opinions, "traditions", subcultures, lifestyles or, to use Avtar Brah's apt terminology, modalities of existence'. (Werbner, 2002b: 123; Brah, 1996).

6.2 Sunni/Zaydi? Sufi/Salafi?

While Islam in Liverpool has a history pre-dating the arrival of Yemenis in the 1970s and 1980s onwards it was only during the 1970s that Liverpool saw the establishment of a purpose-built mosque, with other mosques and institutions becoming established after this point.[85] This mosque will be referred to as Masjid al-Salām. Although this particular mosque, located in Toxteth (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2 for map), was the result of a joint effort by a small number of Pakistanis and Yemenis (Halliday, 2010: 56), the landscape of Islam in Liverpool differs significantly from other areas of the UK in which the trajectory of Islam has been greatly influenced by migration from South Asia and religious movements which developed in this region (see e.g. Gilliat-Ray, 2010).[86] Unlike areas such as Bradford and across the M62 corridor where the South Asian Deobandi, Barelwi and Tablighi Jama'at movements are well represented, Liverpool's largest mosque, Masjid

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[85] See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4 for discussion of Abdullah Quilliam and the Bougham Terrace mosque which later fell into disuse, only recently being re-opened.

[86] Given that 'the 2001 census showed that 68 per cent of the Muslim population [in Britain] was of South Asian origin' (Peach, 2005: 20), it is to be expected that the majority of studies on 'British-Muslims' concentrate on South Asian groups.

al-Salām, as well as another smaller Muslim institution in Toxteth, are both more clearly 'Yemeni' or 'Arab' in their orientation. Timol (2019: 11) writing on the Tablighi Jama'at in Britain highlights the 'Arab' orientation of Masjid al-Salām, noting that a number of other 'Arab' mosques in the UK 'make a point of sending *only Arab TJ groups*…as the usual groups of South Asian origin are more readily objected to' (italics mine), of which:

> The cosmopolitan […] mosque in Liverpool may be cited as another example. Founded (and still managed) primarily by Muslims of Yemeni and Somali extraction, it can in no way be considered Deobandi, yet it has a long history of allowing TJ groups to visit and stay, permitting them to deliver their talks after the daily prayers. (2019: 11)

While this chapter is less concerned with delineating institutional affiliation or organisation of specific Islamic movements, the above nonetheless highlights a significant 'Arab' or 'Yemeni' orientation of Islam in Liverpool. Thus the following section will now discuss the particular histories of Islam in Yemen paying particular attention to how these have become incorporated into discourses and articulations of Yemeni (national) identities.

Despite Yemen's Sunni/Zaydi split, the complex political and social interrelations of these two denominations demands moving beyond '*madhhab* essentialism' (Wedeen, 2008: 157, Messick, 2005: 161). As Islam is understood here as a discursive terrain, *madhhabs* (schools of thought or schools of jurisprudence) must similarly not be treated as self-isolated units, theologically or sociologically. Indeed, it would be inaccurate to assume an irrevocable sectarian boundary separating Yemeni Shāfi'ī (Sunni) and Zaydi (Shī'ā) Muslims, as such an approach obscures how these two groups are mutually discursively constituted within the Yemeni context.[87] In addition, these sectarian differences within

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[87] Although Zaydism is formally classed as a branch of Shī'ā Islam, Chapter 3 discussed how it differs significantly from Twelver Shi'ism.

Yemen are implicated in the post-unification nation-building project, but not primarily in terms of doctrinal difference.

Although before the interwar-period 'there was no notion of a Yemeni citizenry, and legal texts continued to specify affiliation in *madhhab*…of Zaydī or Shafī'ī membership' (Wedeen, 2008: 37), it is important to emphasise that the Shāfī'i/Zaydi divide was, and is, as much (if not more so) rooted in geographic, tribal and socio-economic divide (Carapico, 1998: 61). This further emphasises the need for a nuanced examination of the context, i.e. to simply speak of 'Shī'ā Yemenis' obscures that Zaydism in Yemen has a very particular trajectory, being very much rooted in the specific contexts and histories of North Yemen while also continually in dialogue with neighbouring Shāfī'i populations. The existence and interplay of Shāfī'ism and Zaydism in Yemen do not necessarily represent the axes of a 'divide' within the post-unification political system, as Wedeen (2008: 158) exemplifies: (the now ousted) 'President 'Alī 'Abd Allāh Ṣāliḥ is Zaydī, but the regime, and republican regimes since the royalists' decisive defeat in 1970, have been only nominally Zaydī – at odds with intense Zaydī political identifications or doctrinal commitments'.

While the specific role of Islam in Yemeni politics is not the focus of this chapter, the above places Islam in the Yemeni context, highlighting the ambivalences of sectarian difference which are specific and contingent, as well as differing significantly from the South Asian context. That is to say, despite the contested status of unified Yemen, Islam nonetheless becomes involved in a complex web of (political) relations and conflicts which are not entirely separable from the local/regional/national contexts within Yemen. The role of reformist/revivalist Islam adds a further dynamic to Yemen's religious landscape which is now addressed.

Revivalist/Reformist Islam in Yemen has been examined by several scholars (Knysh, 2001; Wedeen, 2008; Bonnefoy, 2011; Willis, 2018) who discuss its role in the complex interplay of Yemeni politics, notions of nationhood, and religious/political/tribal alliances which resist categorisation along any simple sectarian or tribal lines. Willis (2018) traces the roots of reformist Islam in (North) Yemen to the rule of Imam Yaḥyā al-Dīn.[88] Although formally Zaydi, Imam Yaḥyā employed an anti-imperialist ideology which had much in common with the (reformist) Sunni-Salafi, pan-Islamist movements (ibid., 49). The discourse of a united Muslim 'community' in (North) Yemen was employed by Imam Yaḥyā (r. 1904-48) politically as a means to de-emphasise sectarian divisions. Willis highlights this discourse:

> Yemenis were not defined by *madhhab* in this formulation, even the Zaydī *madhhab*, but by *tawḥīd* or the doctrine of God's absolute oneness. Division within the community was tantamount to the rejection of *tawḥīd* and therefore contrary to Islam itself. (ibid., 53)

Thus this emphasis on (Yemeni) Muslim unity was in part to prevent strategic exploitation of Yemen's internal division by the British in furthering the colonial project in Yemen (ibid., 52-53).

Moving to the post-unification period, Knysh (2001) provides an account of the tensions between Yemeni 'reformists' (salafis) and 'nativists' (sufis), noting that the discourse employed by salafis in Yemen differs substantially from those in Saudi Arabia, primarily in that there is a distancing from associations with (Saudi-backed) Wahhabism given long-standing grievances between Saudi Arabia and Yemen meaning that 'acknowledging this [dependence on the Saudi state] would harm the salafis in the eyes of most Yemenis, since

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[88] Imam Yaḥyā al-Dīn was the ruler of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom (which later became the (North) Yemen Arab Republic) between 1918 and 1948, as well as being the spiritual leader of Yemeni Zaydis from 1904.

this would reduce them to the role of Saudi stooges.' (ibid. 403).[89] Similarly, Bonnefoy's (2011) study emphasises how transnational flows between Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf have resulted in a 'Yemenised' salafism which becomes articulated vis-à-vis or in conjunction with other Yemeni tribal/political/sectarian identities.[90] King's (2012) study further illustrates the multiple positioning of Yemeni religious identities from a Zaydi perspective, noting 'Zaydīs' multiple and overlapping identities are continuously activated or de-activated, especially vis-à-vis adversarial groups like the Salafīs, Traditionists or Twelver Šīʿīs.' (ibid., 417).

Thus Knysh's (2001: 414) characterisation of (reformist) Islam in Yemen as becoming '"localized" through its integration into the parochial politics of Yemeni provinces' agrees with more recently published work (Wedeen, 2008; Bonnefoy, 2012; Willis, 2018) which describes how salafism in Yemen does not neatly map onto the Shāfiʿi/Zaydi distinction or other 'fault lines', instead 'these categories and the interpretive communities to which they refer are not always politically salient, are not necessarily unified, and are always relational' (Wedeen, 2008: 166).

This section has emphasised that despite Yemen's complex and contested political terrain amid sectarian difference, reformist, transnational (pan-) Islamic discourses such as those employed by Salafism have become important in the landscape of Islam in Yemen.

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[89] See Weir (1997, 2007) for a discussion on the emergence of Wahhabism in Yemen. She locates the emergence of Wahhabism in Yemen during the 1970s, particularly in the predominantly Zaydi town of Ṣaʿdah on the Yemen-Saudi border amongst those who had worked in Saudi Arabia or participated in the jihad in Afghanistan. The 'conversion' of Ṣaʿdah Zaydis to Wahhabism is particularly notable. These were primarily 'young men (*shabab*) from a wide range of 'tribal' (*qabili*) and low-status butcher families'[89] (Weir, 1997: 22).

[90] This transnationalism was primarily due to labour migration from Yemen to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, where 'Many of those [Yemenis] repatriated from the Gulf brought back practices associated with the Saudi intellectual traditions of *tawḥīd*' (Wedeen, 2008: 199; see also Birks, Sinclair and Socknat, 1981, for *Aspects of Labour Migration From North Yemen*).

Historically, these have been important in emphasising Yemen's Muslim unity (e.g. Willis, 2018), while more recently in the post-imamate period they have developed out of transnational flows of migrant workers between Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf, but nonetheless becoming re-articulated and re-asserted in Yemeni terms (see Bonnefoy, 2011). The proximity of Yemen to Saudi Arabia and the common association of revivalist Islam with Saudi Arabia poses an interesting perspective in that the dominant Yemeni revivalist/salafist Islam actively distances itself from the Saudi state. In essence, this section has argued that religious identity in Yemen is negotiated and created alongside other positionings such as tribal identity, political affiliation, geographic/regional identities, and so on, which take place in the context of Yemen as a contested state.

6.3 Liverpool-Yemeni Sectarian Ambivalence

How participants narrate their Muslim identities in terms of denomination or movement (or lack thereof) is thus significant as the majority stated that their families' origin is in Malāḥ or other parts of the Central Region (*al-Minṭaqa al-Wusṭā*), which as has been mentioned, itself occupies an ambiguous position within Yemen. While the western side of the Central Region around Radā'a and Malāḥ appears to be majority Shāfī'i (Day, 2012: 49), the area is more broadly notable for being a Shāfī'i-Zaydi mix (ibid.), unlike elsewhere in Yemen where regionally one denomination is more clearly dominant.[91] All Yemeni participants who self-identified as Muslim noted that they considered themselves Sunni, with none expressing affiliation or adherence to any particular *maddhab* within Sunni Islam, e.g. Rīm noted 'I'm just Muslim'. However, one participant later mentioned

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[91] More specifically, Staub (1989: 112) in his ethnography of New York Yemenis notes that there is a large presence of those from Riyāshiyya, just south of Radā'/Malāḥ and that the *qabā'il* from this region are largely Zaydi, but nonetheless they 'belittle any significant difference between *zaydi* and *shafi'i,* saying that the differences are nothing more than a matter of varying postures during prayer'.

after the interview that they had asked their family whether they were Sunni or Zaydi, to which a family member replied 'Zaydi'.[92] This participant felt that the Sunni/Zaydi distinction was not relevant to their identity as a second-generation Muslim in Liverpool, instead echoing the other participants' emphasis on 'just being Muslim'. Such responses can be read as reflecting attitudes and dynamics described in the previous chapters, i.e. that second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni participants de-emphasise divisions (social, political, or religious) which are rooted in Yemen in their articulations of identity. This also recalls McLoughlin's point regarding Bradford Muslims, as he notes:

> it struck me that many 'ordinary' Muslims, old and young alike, did not really identify with sectarian labels. Most did not have a conscious sense of being 'Barelwis' or indeed anything else - they were just 'Muslims' or 'Sunnis' or, when pressed 'not Wahhabis'. (2000: 191)

That said, the everyday de-emphasising of sectarian difference may also represent 'travel' from the everyday Yemeni context in that 'Zaydi and Sunni religious doctrines were largely congruent. Zaydis and Sunnis intermarried, prayed together, and made common political cause.' (Ahram, 2019: 100). Thus in such a context, 'roots' and 'routes' combine: while de-culturated Muslim identities might extend beyond any single locality/nation/ethnicity, such considerations as sectarian ambivalence may simultaneously be informed by 'roots'. The expanding of de-culturated/transnational Muslim identities beyond those firmly rooted in the local/national/ethnic will be explored further in this chapter. First it will be useful to explore the Muslim landscape of Toxteth.

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[92] In addition, Nāṣir (community leader) mentioned that there were very few Zaydi families in Liverpool.

6.4 Travelling Islam: From Yemen to Toxteth

Toxteth is home to two mosques: Masjid al-Salām being the largest mosque in the city, and Masjid al-Bayḍā' being a smaller, more recent addition.[93] The city's main mosque is located off a wide, leafy boulevard which runs from the city centre into Toxteth. Despite its size, it is hidden from view along the main road, only becoming visible once you enter a largely residential street. This street, like many others in Toxteth, has been long occupied by derelict houses, although these are now being renovated and new housing is being constructed. It is possible to be completely unaware of the mosque's location (or even existence), given where it is situated as there is little else of note along the street, giving people little reason to enter the street when travelling between the city and Toxteth.

Despite its unassuming location, Masjid al-Salām is the main mosque of the city, with the largest capacity accomodating approximately 2,500 people.[94] It was also the only purpose-built mosque in the city, completed in 1974, when Yemenis began to arrive in larger numbers. Brown and de Figueiredo (2015: 79) note that the site was acquired in 1958 by the Liverpool Muslim Society, which was founded by the efforts of the small Pakistani and Yemeni community. Before the acquisition of this site, Bunnell (2016: 92) mentions that Muslims in Liverpool (including Malaysians who were once a significant diasporic group in the city) would pray in the home of the Yemeni Imam ʿAlī Ḥizzām who was a leading founder of the Liverpool Muslim Society. The mosque itself was refurbished in 2008 during the ECoC, now boasting a golden dome and crescent, and golden minarets. Until recently, the imams and leadership, according to participants' accounts, have been largely

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[93] Participants informed me of an additional mosque in L8 which has been described as Salafi/Daʿwah which I did not visist.

[94] The mosque has spaces for both men and women, with a separate women's entrance. I was unable to ascertain the exact capacity of each space, but the main hall (i.e. the men's space) appears considerably larger.

Yemeni, delivering *khuṭbat al-jum'a* (Friday sermon) in Arabic. Nāṣir (50s, community leader) notes that since it is the largest mosque in the city, it serves Muslims from all backgrounds:

> Masjid al-Salām is actually always, what we call the *jāmi'* – *jāmi'* means everyone. It has Nigerians, Somalis, Yemenis. To be fair, the Yemenis who were interested in the *jāmi'*, none of them had the skills to become strong board members, some of them are shopkeepers and good people, but not skilful to lead it and because of the nature of their background, other communities have people who came with education in Islam like Egyptians and Nigerians.

This agrees with Timol's (2019: 11) description above regarding its 'cosmopolitan' nature. For Nāṣir and others who echoed similar sentiments, the older first-generation Yemeni leadership (i.e. those who established the earlier Yemeni community associations, in comparison to the urban Yemeni leaders) are portrayed in more parochial terms, less attuned to the increasing ethnic diversity of the mosque. This also reflects the participants' earlier articulations which highlighted the generational divide, or, the diasporic tension of 'roots' and 'routes'. Another participant describes how the recent change in imam and leadership has resulted in some Liverpool-Yemenis preferring to attend Toxteth's other mosque, Masjid al-Bayḍā', which continues to deliver the *khuṭba* in Arabic:

> Even [though] al-Salām was established and dominated by the Yemenis…this guy [the new Imam] came and he doesn't speak Arabic even. All my life I knew they were delivering *khuṭbat al-jum'a* in Arabic, but when he came, he started delivering it in English, so they pushed the Yemenis and Arabs out, and they [previously] dominated the mosque…But now the majority of Yemeni and Arabs go to al-Bayḍā', however I go to al-Salām sometimes as well, I have no issues going there. I go quite often.

It is interesting to note that although the new non-Yemeni imam possesses a high level of Classical Arabic necessary to lead prayers and recite from the Qur'ān and other Islamic texts, this participant is referring specifically to the somewhat unrehearsed delivery of the

khuṭba in Arabic. The association of al-Bayḍā' with older, Yemeni or Arab men in particular was repeated by several participants. These first-generation individuals, born in Yemen, are more comfortable in their native Arabic language highlighting the persistence of ethnicity and its role in processes of fusion and fissure in the institutionalisation of Islam in Britain (cf. McLoughlin, 1998; 2005b, for an account of the institutionalisation of Islam in Bradford). Second-participants, however, will be seen to prioritise Islamic knowledge in the English language. Rīm (30s, born in Liverpool, social work) notes a further motivation for the establishment of the more clearly Yemeni/Arab-orientated al-Bayḍā' in terms of proximity to the Yemeni hub of Lodge Lane:

> Rīm: Well the al-Salām is the main one so everyone goes there, but al-Bayḍā' is small and ran by Yemenis so it's mostly Yemenis.[95] Two friends opened that. They do a lot of events for kids and coffee mornings and fundraising and things like that.

> Researcher: Was it set up because they wanted a more Yemeni space?

> Rīm: I don't think so, I think it's just because all the shops [on Lodge Lane] were close and they'd want to go and pray so it's just closer.

Although Rīm does not perceive its establishment as being due to specific (ethnic) Yemeni concerns, its proximity to Lodge Lane as a Yemeni hub, Yemeni leadership, and use of Arabic language nonetheless position al-Bayḍā' more clearly as a Yemeni/Arab 'ethnic mosque' in comparison to the more ethnically-diverse al-Salām. This is further exemplified by the dense interpersonal connections among Liverpool-Yemenis: its founders being friends or relatives of several participants, as well as, for example, the imam of al-Bayḍā' attending the wedding described in Chapter 3. Thus, while both

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[95] al-Bayḍā', located in a converted terraced house has a far smaller capacity than purpose-built al-Salām. Although I was unable to obtain a precise figure, I estimate a capacity of no more than a few hundred.

mosques in Toxteth have a strong Yemeni component, al-Salām is increasingly aware of the multi-ethnic character of its congregation and the need to use English as a common language. It is also important to note that the existence of al-Bayḍā' alongside al-Salām does not represent sectarian difference or conflict, as many second-generation participants did not show a strong preference for one mosque over the other, instead citing practical concerns such as location or preferred language. Ṭāriq (40s, born in Merseyside, various employment including community work) echoes this:

> Al-Salām was founded by Yemenis and built by Yemenis. The first imams were among the major rolemodels. There are Somalis and others, but we were at the forefront. There's a few mosques that have opened up now as the community gets bigger, like al-Bayḍā', which was opened up by Yemenis. The mosques are all sort of intermixed now, it's difficult for them to be separated [along sectarian/ethnic lines]. I'd usually go to al-Bayḍā' because it's close and my dad likes going there, and an imam is my relative. But if I'm [near] by al-Salām, I'll go there.

Second-generation Layla (20s, born in Liverpool, student) reveals a generational difference in attitudes, noting her ambivalence regarding al-Salām under the new leadership:

> I used to go the big mosque a lot, but now I hardly go because it's turned political…They started mixing politics in their seminars. It was just too much, and also like, *there's a gap between the older and younger generation*, like they brought a new *shaykh* to the big mosque and they [the older generation of Yemenis] are questioning "Why have we got this guy?".
> […]
> So, we had a Yemeni *shaykh*, very old, traditional…but obviously his answers and interpretations *were influenced by his upbringing*, but now we have this new guy…he spoke to the young people in the mosque like very ghetto, but I liked it *because I looked around and the young people were really listening*. The traditional, like…getting someone to interpret…oh, it's just so much harder. I feel like now we've got this new *shaykh* everything is moving and we've got change now.

Although Layla perceives the new imam's engagement with the youth, exemplified by his colloquial use of English, as positive, she also expresses ambivalence regarding the introduction of 'politics' into the sermons. Despite this shift in (institutional) focus away from a purely 'traditional' Yemen Islam, during fieldwork visits to al-Salām I frequently conversed with groups of predominantly older Yemeni men, several of whom I had also met at the wedding as well as being introduced to a part-time Yemeni imam. This indicates that the institutional orientation in terms of *madhhab*/sect, or the discourse or rhetoric of a prominent leader, does not necessarily correspond to how 'everyday Muslims' perceive or use these spaces. Indeed, Maḥmūd (50s, self-employed) similarly notes that despite al-Salām's multi-ethnic character, in his experience groups tend to form along ethnic/national and generational lines:

> I've seen a lot of the youths over the last five years, Yemeni or Iraqi, say. When they finish a prayer on Eid, they only congregate outside the mosque, like Yemeni youths there, Iraqi youths there, Egyptian youths there. I see the elderly also being on their own, so the elderly Yemeni people, they will be over there. The Syrians will be over there. So they would segment themselves, they will join themselves together during the ritual and prayers, but also if they're about to break the fast they would segment themselves during eating, so the all inclusive practicality, in practice, it's not really there.

In contrast, Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) who has previously been noted for her engagement in 'community' projects across ethnicity enjoys the diversity of al-Salām:

> There are instances of 'you can only be part of one establishment and not two', and things like that. Things are changing now. I was in the mosque today and yesterday and it was open to everyone, *it didn't matter what school of thought you followed, or what culture*, it was really beneficial to have that and made me feel really connected to the mosque. It is largely Yemeni and Somali though, a few Asians but not many. But the course yesterday, every background was around me.

The above begins to reveal the complex interrelatedness of ethnicity and Islam in Liverpool – on the one hand, while a prominent imam of al-Salām favours a de-culturated Islam, this nonetheless takes place in the context of a largely Yemeni/Arab/Somali congregation with participants noting the persistence of ethnicity in interpersonal networks.[96] Thus, at this stage it is important to note that Muslim identities can be simultaneously narrated as extending beyond ethnicity (i.e. 'Muslim first' identities, DeHanas, 2013a), while also being part of the fabric of ethnicity. That is to say, a 'Muslim first' identity need not imply de-culturation. Whether Liverpool-Yemenis discuss Muslim identities in de-culturated terms will be explored in further sections.

In surveying the institutional 'terrain' of Islam in Toxteth, this section has highlighted two important points: a) that (Sunni) Islam rooted in Yemen has provided the foundations for several of Liverpool's Muslim institutions and b) that there is an emerging generational difference in attitudes which is precipitated especially upon how Islam is negotiated alongside ethnicity – this also links to the argument of the previous chapter which highlighted the second generation's more outward-facing forms of engagement as 'demotic cosmopolitanism'. This section has also highlighted that whereas other UK cities such as Bradford show strong transnational connections to specific Islamic movements which arose in South Asia, the institutional landscape of Islam in Toxteth is largely non-denominationally Sunni. The earlier generations arrived to Liverpool before or shortly after the unification of Yemen, establishing various 'community' organisations fragmented according to Yemenis' regional, geographic, tribal and political divides (some of which continue), but a non-sectarian Muslim identity was much less contested, represented by the

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[96] This was made clear during my brief discussions with the imam, as well as his previous institutional affiliations.

establishing of a single mosque. As Knysh (2001: 403) notes, after unification 'Islam has come to serve as a convenient and accepted discursive vehicle in the relatively open public debates around the country's political, social, and religious direction and identity'. This is not to say that other forms of Yemeni-based Islam do not exist in Liverpool (as indeed section 6.6 discusses a transnational Yemeni Sufi movement), but rather that a broadly Arab-Sunni institutional landscape reflects the development of a Yemeni discourse in which Islam became a unifying, rather than divisive, identity.[97]

6.5 Muslim Identities: From the Family to Multi-Ethnic L8

This section will now explore how second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis narrate their Muslim identities, and to what extent these are 'de-culturated'. In her article on 'revivalist Islam', Kibria (2008) examines its rise among Bangladeshi youth in the UK and the US, concluding that its attraction stems from it being perceived as a means to assert a Muslim identity which resonates more clearly with their experience, in which they are 'increasingly unable to relate meaningfully to the ethnic culture of their parents. At the same time, they feel distant from and unaccepted by the dominant society'. (Kibria, 2008; 246). For Kibria and numerous other scholars (Glynn, 2002; Roy, 2004; Werbner 2004a), this alienation underpins the growing interest in revivalist Islam among diaspora youth. Other studies (DeHanas, 2013a; McKenna and Francis; 2018; Phoenix, 2019), while not focusing specifically on revivalist Islam, also note the prevalence of 'Muslim first' identities. DeHanas' (2013a) study corroborates Kibria's (2008: 246) assertion that 'Among other things, revivalist Islam may provide Muslim migrant youth with a means to

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[97] Brandt (2017: 103) notes: 'In 1962, the project of non-*maddhab* identity was taken up by republican ideologues whose goal was to create the Republic as an enduring ideological form through the merger of Sunni and Zaydi doctrines, in an effort to create a 'unified' Islam' '.

assert their distinction and independence from the immigrant generation.' Alongside these, there is also a body of literature which explores non-revivalist Muslim identities, presenting an alternative perspective in which 'Muslim' is not necessarily the only or main identity, but more ambivalently positioned alongside other identities in comparison to the 'organised' or 'vocal' identities associated with revivalism. (Jeldtoft, 2011:1135; see also Schielke, 2012; Fadil, 2017).

The following sections will discuss how the strong transnational/local connections to Yemen mean second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis articulate Islam both with reference to Yemen, and Yemeni ethnicity and the family, (i.e. 'culturated' or 'territorialised' Islam), while also articulating Muslim identities as extending beyond ethnicity. The following quotes illustrate a variety of Liverpool-Yemenis' narrations of Islam and Muslim identities from multiple perspectives. These have been chosen for highlighting important aspects of this chapter which now considers how these articulations reflect translocal Muslim identities and performances, how they reflect participants' navigation/negotiation of their multiple positioned belongings, and whether participants discuss Muslim identities in terms of de-culturation.

Maḥmūd (40s, born in the North West, self-employed) describes how his ritual performance is directly influenced by his experiences in Yemen, further highlighting the importance of the lived experiences of simply being in Yemen for many participants:

> Some might be prompt in praying five times a day, but some might find it a struggle, I'm talking from experience. If I want to pray, I pray when I can, but them rituals are set in stone, five times a day. As an individual I'd say I'm not prompt praying nor do I see it as being compulsory to do, and one of the reasons why is *because when I was in Yemen myself when the call to prayer came on I'd see a number of people rush to the mosque and also the people who didn't want to go, they'd just stand around* and the perspective it gave me is that *it's*

different from Saudi for example. In Saudi when the call to prayer comes on the restaurants and shops close and the police are patrolling around but in certain cities they actually keep an eagle eye, they're always on the watch. *In Yemen what I saw* was when the call to prayer came on there was no onlooking, if you chose not to go, just don't publicly announce it like 'I'm not going!', just don't go, so when I saw that kind of movement*, if that's happening in Yemen, that could be happening in* [among] *Yemeni people here*, if you want to go to the mosque, go the mosque.

Zamīla (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment including shop work) when asked if she would prioritise any single identity (Yemeni, Scouse, Muslim) above the other, notes that they are fully intertwined for her, before discussing the role of Islam within Yemeni identities. She then further notes that she consciously became more observant in her practice of Islam due to considerations of marriage and friendship groups. Notably, the transcript below reveals that Zamīla's articulations of Islam/Muslim identities were closely bound up with the family, connections to Yemen, and her Yemeni/Arab friends.

It's weird, because *I'd say every single aspect of it is just as important*, *because all of it is part of my identity*. I wouldn't split them up. As much as people might like me to, I wouldn't

[…] *Islam is a big part of being Yemeni*, it's a massive part of it. Because culturally, we have been brought up with both cultures, I'll still cook Arab food for when people come over, whether it's English mates or Arab mates. I don't have drink in the house or anything like that. I still feel really in touch with it all [Yemeni culture and traditions].

[…] You know how in Arab homes they have a separate men and women's room…in our village they accept us, in ours, whenever visitors came we were fine to go into the men's living room and have a cup of tea with my dad. Our family is brilliant like that.

[…] I was a rebel until I reached about thirty, I started praying, stopped going out as much. I started hanging around with a lot of Arab girls, so it might have been that as well. Loads of reasons, I wanted to get married, loads of stuff. So for eight whole years, I started praying, fasting... Now and again I'd go to the mosque. In Ramadan of a night, it was with my mum and

dad, during Ramadan it's lovely, but I always find it too…too many janglers [gossipers], they always talk about everyone, and people saying 'I don't like this imam, or this or that'.

Zahra (20s, born in Liverpool, student) when discussing 'Muslim first' and 'Arab' identities instead emphasised 'Yemeniness' above all:

I don't like being called Arab or Middle Eastern, I really hate that, because why is it the Middle East? Because it's where the Arab countries are in reference to Britain so why are we using them as the centre point. I don't like being called Arab either because other Arab countries treat Yemen quite badly. I try to do more Yemeni things, and wear more Yemeni colours like wristbands and scarves sometimes to prove that I am Yemeni and I don't want to be associated with 'Arabness', I'd rather be Yemeni. I feel like there is more to be proud of being Yemeni than Arab.

Researcher: Would you say a Muslim identity takes precedence in any way?

Zahra: It's like in weddings, *it's just so cultured*, I don't know if that makes sense, it's different like on Eid, it's just different, it's very distinct, like the 'Yemeniness' of it all.

Ṭāriq (50s, born in Merseyside, various employment including community work) when discussing the role of Salafism in Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim life, noted that his father was a 'traditionally conservative' Yemeni:

There are elements of Salafism in Liverpool…I know a number of Salafis who are lovely people. Everyone thinks they are very dour and serious, but the ones I know love to joke and stuff. One of the Salafi guys, he had a wedding, and everyone wants to dance but we didn't. Everyone respected that and just got on with it. You know, there are those things and they happen but it's not like a show-stopper. He's entitled to his beliefs. But the Salafi isn't a big element. *I mean you could classify us as traditional*, very conservative with traditions and religious beliefs, like my dad, I would say *he's just the ordinary run-of-the-mill shāfī'i*.

When asking Layla (20s, born in Liverpool, student) about her multiple identities, she also emphasises 'Yemeniness':

> People have mentioned that they're British *but it's more like Yemeni comes first*. I like it, there's a proud voice in the Yemeni community, proud of where we've come from. But I want to know why they're proud, how did they come here. I think it's because Yemenis are so authentic, in terms of the Middle East, it's the most authentic Arab country.
>
> Researcher: So how about your thoughts on the labels 'Yemeni', 'Muslim' and 'Arab', and how you might relate to those?
>
> Layla: I hardly use the word British. *I'd say I'm a Scouser and British*. In terms of being Yemeni and Arab... I've always considered myself as Arab, then Yemeni, but Yemenis were the first Arabs, so...only because it makes sense I think. *Religion, or being Muslim is a big part, but I've always seen like Yemenis don't talk about it*. It's more like a spiritual journey.

Ḥāmid (50s, born in Yemen, community leader) similarly notes:

> I would say, I am Yemeni, I am Muslim and I am Arab. I am Yemeni first, Muslim, and Arab. Arab is a big umbrella, but before that I am Yemeni.

The above demonstrates that for the majority of second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni participants, there was little in the way of articulations which attempt to clearly separate 'Islam' from 'Yemeniness'. Participants overwhelmingly did not express conflict between Yemeni 'culture' and 'religion', nor was this articulated as a motivation for moving towards a more de-cultured Muslim identity. Layla notably mentions that 'Yemenis do mix culture and religion a lot', going on to discuss how Islam can provide a 'tactic' to negotiate cultural expectations, particularly those surrounding young women but did not elaborate greatly on this. Nonetheless, she does not emphasise a 'de-cultured' Muslim identity as being more important than her 'Yemeniness', as she frequently asserted the opposite in strong articulations of being all of Scouse-Yemeni-Muslim, reflected in her

various artistic endeavours and performances which highlight the intersection of these identities.

Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) noted that it was only after becoming more knowledgeable about Islam through English-language courses that she 'felt closer to Yemenis' and Yemeni identity:

> For a long time, I would avoid Muslims. Back then they were all Yemenis, the barrier for me being with them was not knowing the religion, but back then I didn't know that *a lot of people only knew the culture*. Once you get it, it becomes so easy to interact with other people, once you know the religion. *Being Yemeni has become a bigger part of my identity now*. I think what's helped is that the Yemenis can speak English now, not some of the elder generation, but the majority of them can speak English

Indeed several participants further noted in response to a hypothetical situation I posed them that if 'Islam' was removed from being 'Yemeni', Yemeni individuals would still essentially be living as Muslims. Only two Yemeni participants explicitly stated a 'Muslim first' identity, but also echoed a similar *madhhab*-ambivalence.

When asked how she would rank various labels in order or importance, Munīra noted:

> Muslim first, Scouse, Yemeni, British, Arab.

Maryam who has a background which differs significantly from other participants, also noted a Muslim-first identity.[98]

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[98] Maryam was born in Yemen, moving to the UK at a young age and attending a Christian boarding school where she had very little contact with other Yemenis. She moved to Liverpool later in life, but is now active in various educational projects centered around the mosque(s).

A Muslim is a Muslim, *and the Muslim identity comes first and foremost before the culture*. I don't lean towards any *madhhab* but I practice as a Shāfī'i, but having said that I always say [to students in the mosque as a teacher] 'let's just follow the best of mankind and leave the divisions'. I haven't even gone deep into the *shāfī'i* [*maddhab*]. My main contact is with al-Salām because it's the big one and houses lots of people from different backgrounds, the other mosques are quite small. The small mosque usually caters for older Yemeni men, that kind of thing, whereas the other is more vibrant, it houses young ones, and women, and all different ages. I stayed away from the mosque for a while because I don't like the headache of politics. The youth relate to the new imam because he speaks English, as opposed to the Yemenis who only do the *khuṭba* in Arabic. And the kids go out not knowing anything. But there are still people complaining 'Why isn't the *khuṭba* in Arabic?'

Seen from the various perspectives above, everyday Muslim identities must be conceived in terms of multiple positioned belongings. That is to say, second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis discussed Islam in both ethnicised terms, and in terms which extend beyond ethnicity. Dissatisfaction with Islamic learning gained only from the family setting and earlier community associations, hindered by the use Arabic over English has meant a number of second-generation participants chose to more actively engage in Islamic learning later in life. The motivations for this 'religious turn' were narrated variously as stemming from increased 'visibility' of Islam in L8 predominantly due to the influx of Somalis, the impact of 9/11 for a small number of participants, personal motivations regarding marriage and family life, and the wish to engage more publicly with others. Crucially, however, this has not translated into a de-cultured Muslim identity, as the quotes above reveal that such re-negotiation of Muslim identities has instead reinforced Yemeni attachments, while simultaneously being emphasised as a means for broader engagement within Liverpool's multi-ethnic Muslim landscape. Additionally, I argue that the context of (Sunni) Islam in Yemen as well as Yemen's geographic location with its cultural, linguistic, and historical links to the early period of Islam make 'de-culturation' less salient for Liverpool-Yemenis. The idea of Yemenis being 'the first Arabs' was

repeated on many occasions, and when taken with the understanding that the emergence of Islam was initially an Arab phenomenon with the Yemeni region playing a prominent role in these histories, it becomes clearer that for Liverpool-Yemenis, Islam is intrinsically linked to the social imaginaries of Yemen discussed in the previous chapters.

For example, when I asked Munīra about how she might separate 'Islam' from 'Yemeniness' she noted:

> One way to think of it is, do you know, when you think of some traditional Yemenis, if they weren't Muslim, they'd still be following Islam just without the label of 'Islam' quite closely. Whereas when I think of Asians, I don't really get the same feel from the Asian culture, but that's only my perception.

This was also further exemplified when I asked participants where, if they had the choice, they would prefer to study Islam. All participants, excluding one who said she would choose the US, said they would go to Yemen, with Ṭāriq (50s, born in Merseyside, various employment including community work) noting that:

> To be honest, *the link to Saudi Arabia is overplayed*, they only reason it has any significance is because of Mecca and Medina. The role Saudi plays is not really that important. *I would not choose Saudi to study Islam*, if I wanted to experience the 'wrong' type of religious training I would go there. There are much more better places where you will get a better, real understanding. So, I know lots of people go to *Ḥaḍramawt in Yemen*, or Cairo, or Damascus. In a historical sense, Saudi is a dot in time.

Similarly, Maḥmūd emphasises Yemen as a centre of Islamic learning:

> If the Yemenis…said "We're from Yemen, we have a very long-term historical tradition, would we have to go into Saudi Arabia to find out the true meaning of Islam that we're practicing?" No, I don't think so. But why would I say that? Just because we're Arabs, we don't go to Saudi? Would Egyptians go?

Hayfā, of mixed Yemeni-Malaysian background (among others), highlights the historical Indian Ocean-centred connections between Yemen and Malaysia in influencing where she would choose to study Islam. Her account further paints a picture of Liverpool as containing a microcosm of Yemen's diasporic connections in that the Yemeni-Indian Ocean-Horn of Africa connections continue to be remade in Liverpool:

> I'd say because my dad is Yemeni, I would say Yemen [for Islamic learning], and even from my Malaysian side, my granddad said people would go to Yemen to study to become imams and stuff, so I would chose Yemen, I wouldn't really associate it with Saudi.

While everyday de-cultured (British-)Muslim identities are not necessarily expressed in terms of self-identification with reformist movements such as Salafism, these movements and their associated institutions are nonetheless influential in providing 'tactics' for young British-Muslims to negotiate diasporic tensions (see DeHanas, 2013a). I argue that the association between Salafism/reformist Islam and Saudi-backed movements in the Yemeni context provides a further reason against which Liverpool-Yemenis do not clearly articulate de-cultured Muslim identities; to be 'salafi' or 'wahhabi' in the Yemeni context implies association with the Saudi state – something from which Liverpool-Yemenis actively distance themselves. Indeed, Zahra's earlier quote highlighted her wish to 'be more Yemeni' in response to the Gulf states' treatment of Yemen. When asked whether she or other Yemenis distance themselves from associations with Saudi Arabia, she noted regarding the older generation that:

> I think they do, because *it* [associations with Saudi] *has a stigma now*, like, if you say you're Wahhabi, you'll have it [you'll receive strong criticism]. They [Yemenis] just hate it. I just generally think it's a reputation thing.

In this way, second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis reframe Yemen and Yemeni identities as legitimately 'Islamic', with reference to Yemen being an important centre of Arab-

Muslim culture and Islamic learning. This, of course, now takes places in the context of the current crisis in which Saudi Arabia is perceived as hostile thereby providing further motivation for rejecting movements which carry associations with Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Liverpool lacks any strong institutional representation of reformist movements from South Asia, therefore providing a terrain in which the translocal connections to Yemen continue to play an important role in the continued re-making and re-negotiation of travelling Muslim identities among Liverpool-Yemenis. That said, while participants distanced themselves from associations with the Saudi state, several mentioned a minority of Liverpool-Yemenis of a Salafi-orientation, and as Ṭāriq's quote reveals, these everyday interactions are not necessarily construed in terms of conflict, but reveal the co-existence of a multiplicity of Muslim identities. Rīm further exemplifies these everyday ambivalences:

> My family are religious but not strict. Yeah, *more, I'd say culture*. Like, my dad has been to Mecca three times, I've been twice, my brothers have been. Half practice properly, half don't, but we don't judge each other… *I'd say most of the Yemenis just live for the culture and the Sunni Islam religion*. And now it doesn't matter, a Shī'i will marry a Sunni, a Wahhabi will marry a…

The above also provides a counterpoint to Roy's (2003; 2004) notion that diasporic Islam in the West is increasingly de-territorialised and 'secularised' with an emphasis on the global *umma*. Roy (2004: 258) notes that 'Neofundamentalism promotes the decontextualisation of religious practices' and that it 'rejects the very concept of culture' (ibid.) Although Roy's arguments may certainly apply at a global level, particularly in respect to the global flows of finance in various Islamic movements, the 'meroscopia' of the everyday (to borrow Werbner's, 2002a, words) shows a far greater presence of ambivalence, hybridity, and multiplicity in the construction of identities (Muslim or otherwise) than a global perspective allows for. As has been seen, second-generation

Liverpool-Yemenis routinely speak of Yemeni 'culture', 'just being Muslim' alongside Scouse and Yemeni identities, the role of Yemeni-led mosques, or being a 'run-of-the-mill *shāfiʿi*' – these articulations of Islam are in many ways 'rooted' in the everyday non-denominational Yemeni context. In this way, ancestry, kinship, translocality and imaginaries of the past re-inserted into the present form an important part of Liverpool-Yemenis' self-understanding as Muslims. As has been seen, however, these identities are not fixed, pre-made, or singular: they are the result of complex negotiations of multiple positioned 'roots' and 'routes' through which the second generation create new forms of being and belonging as Scouse-Yemeni-Muslims in a multi-ethnic and majority non-Muslim environment.

Thus far the role of Islam in constructing Liverpool-Yemeni identities has been explored with reference to Islam in the Yemeni (national) context, the persistence of (Yemeni) ethnicity in Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities, and the everyday ambivalences of sectarian affiliation. Section 6.2 focused on the complex nature of the Sunni/Zaydi divide within Yemen in which discourses of (Muslim) unity have become emphasised over division in the context of a contested state. These also take place alongside the emergence of contested Salafi movement(s), as Bonnefoy (2011: 11) notes 'Sufis, socialists, Nasserites, liberals, Zaydis, as well as government officials all have their say on the Salafi phenomenon, usually claiming its development is the result of Saudi proselytisation policies that aim at destabilising Yemen'. In light of this, reformist movements have little space in the participants' own articulations of Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities – instead they reclaim Yemen and Yemeni-Muslim identities relationally against the backdrop of Saudi interference by invoking Yemen's ancient histories, the Islam of the family, and 'everyday' non-denominational de-politicised Yemeni-Islam. While Salafism,

Yemeni or otherwise, was construed as unimportant or distant from the participants' own constructions of identity, the following section now considers the role of a translocal Yemeni Sufi movement.

Several participants mentioned that they would choose to study Islam in Ḥaḍramawt, an arid South-Eastern region of Yemen which has historically been the centre of diasporic connections flowing between Yemen and the Indian Ocean. I later found that a specific town in Ḥaḍramawt, Tarīm, was an important locus of a translocal (or even transnational) Liverpool-Yemeni (neo-traditionalist) Sufi movement. The following section, drawing upon fieldwork observations and participants accounts', will now consider how this movement reflects both the importance and embeddedness of 'Yemen' in Liverpool's Muslim landscape, while also differing from the more clearly 'ethnic' Muslim institutions and articulations of Muslim identity rooted in the translocal family.

6.6 The Tarīm Connection: A Yemeni Sufi Order in Liverpool

Roughly half-way through the fieldwork period, I became aware of a further Islamic institution in Liverpool of the Bā 'Alawi *ṭarīqa* which is centred in Tarīm, in the province of Ḥaḍramawt.[99] Several participants noted attending this institution, including Farīda and Sārah, both Liverpudlian reverts, one of whom has lived and studied in Tarīm for nearly a decade. Alongside the translocal Liverpool-Malāḥ/Radā'/Central Region connections represented by Liverpool-Yemeni family networks, Liverpool's Bā 'Alawī movement represents another dimension of Liverpool's translocal connections to Yemen. This movement's presence in Liverpool is not, however, strongly connected to nor maintained

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[99] *Ṭarīqa* meaning 'path' or 'way' is the Arabic term for a Sufi order.

by individual Liverpool-Yemeni translocal family networks, but nonetheless further adds to the Yemeni landscape of Islam in Liverpool. The following sections will discuss the neo-traditionalist Bā 'Alawī *ṭarīqa* in the Yemeni/Ḥaḍrami context, contrasting with Salafi/neo-fundamentalist movements, but nonetheless both sharing a transnational dimension in the sense of a 'global mission/*da'wah*' with the Bā 'Alawī *ṭarīqa* being particularly 'international' in its propagation (see Knysh, 2001). What role this movement plays in second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities will then be discussed.

In many respects, Ḥaḍramawt is differentiated from the rest of the Yemen region in terms of geography, diasporic connections, and religious landscape. While the western (North and South) Yemeni regions have historically been orientated more towards the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean as evidenced in the flows of people, ideas and trade, Ḥaḍramawt looks towards the Indian Ocean (see Ho's, 2006, *The Graves of Tarim* for an extensive study on Ḥaḍrāmi mobility, also Freitag, 1999). Although Ḥaḍrāmis are a significant diaspora group spread across the Indian Ocean in Malaysia, Singapore, and East Africa, none of the participants in this study mentioned family connections to Ḥaḍramawt, nor do Ḥaḍrāmis appear to be present in any significant numbers (if at all) in Liverpool. Nonetheless, the importance of Ḥaḍramawt and Tarīm as a centre of Islamic learning was discussed by several participants, including several who are not connected to Liverpool's Bā 'Alawī movement. Thus, this section will discuss how this movement both reinforces wider Yemeni-attachments for some second-generation participants in a manner which extends beyond the family, while also representing a transnational neo-traditionalist Sufi movement on a much broader scale.

Ḥaḍramawt, and Tarīm in particular, have long been considered centres of Shāfi'ī Islamic scholarship with a strong connection to the Bā 'Alawī Order.[100] This branch of Sufi Islam is thoroughly 'Yemeni' in its origins, centred around those who claim descent from the Prophet Muhammad, as Alatas (2011: 47) writes 'Bā 'Alawī (children of 'Alawī) is a term used to denote those descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (*sāda*) who settled in the Hadramawt valley of southern Yemen'. Contrasted with other Sufi orders, the Bā 'Alawi *ṭarīqa* places greater importance upon the direct Prophetic lineage as a source of legitimacy, emphasising the imitation of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, especially the *sāda* of Bā 'Alawī. Several scholars (Freitag, 1999; Knysh, 2001) writing in the years following Yemen's unification, observed a possible resurgence in Sufi movements noting also the opposition which these generated. While opposition appears to have been widespread in the North of Yemen (Knysh, 2001: 402), Bonnefoy (2011: 234) notes that in Tarīm, 'Probably more so than elsewhere in Yemen, resistance to Salafism was fully and openly expressed as it was then the Sufis who dominated the "religious market"'. Additionally, the Bā 'Alawī Order is not merely a parochial form of Yemeni 'nativist' Islam, as the renowned Tarīmī scholar Ḥabīb 'Umar made significant efforts to internationalise his mission, the success of which Knysh (2001: 414) attributes to the use of multi-media technologies. Indeed, the Yemeni state engaged strategically with Ḥaḍramawt's Sufi leaders due to their global network 'that extended from the United Kingdom to India' (Bonnefoy, 2011: 233). Therefore, the arrival of the Bā 'Alawī *ṭarīqa* in Liverpool differs significantly in several respects from the travelling Islam of the other

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[100] This is not to be confused with the 'Alawiyya Order which Seddon (2014: 118) describes as a North African 'branch of the Shādhilī Sufi order'. It is also interesting to note the prominence of an Alawī *shaykh*, Abdullāh 'Alī al-Ḥakīmī, among the earlier seafaring generation of Yemenis under whose guidance 'the British Yemeni communities underwent a dramatic religious transformation, introducing new rituals and practices in accordance with the teachings of the 'Alawī *ṭarīqa*' (ibid. 119). Although the 'Alawiyya Order appears to have dwindled among Yemenis in Britain and has no direct connection to the more clearly Yemeni/Ḥaḍrāmi Bā 'Alawī Order, its earlier prominence nonetheless forms part of the history of Sufi movements among British-Yemenis.

institutions: no participants noted that their families had connections or affiliation to this movement, nor do they come from the region where this movement is centred; in other words, while the overall Yemeni landscape of Islam in Liverpool may certainly have provided a space for it to take root, it did not 'travel' with the translocal families of the second generation as will now be discussed.

During the fieldwork period, I was invited to attend a weekly gathering led by a prominent Liverpool-born non-Yemeni Muslim who studied in Tarīm for six years under the guidance of several renowned Bā 'Alawī scholars, including 'Umar bin Hafīẓ, founder of the neo-traditional Dār al-Muṣṭafā college (Knysh, 2001: 406).[101] These weekly gatherings took place in a beautifully refurbished church at some distance from Lodge Lane. Participants described these gatherings as *mawlids*.[102] The following are fieldwork notes collated from my visits which further illustrate the translocal elements of the movement, as well as highlighting that despite these connections to Yemen, it is more clearly a de-ethnicised movement in the Liverpool context.

Fieldwork Notes, April 2018:

> Upon entering, I was greeted by several participants in the café downstairs and invited to remove my shoes before going to the main hall upstairs. The aroma of Arabian *bukhūr* (incense) floated through the modestly, but beautifully, decorated hall with its exposed wooden ceiling-joints, wooden-slat windows and the several potted plants and trees placed about the hall, giving it a spacious and friendly atmosphere. At the front of the hall, the Shaykh dressed in a deep-blue *thawb* (robe) sat on a low cushion with the *bukhūr* and several books beside him. Men were sat on the soft carpeting at the front, while women sat at the back. I

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[101] Hamid (2014: 183) note the importance of this shaykh within 'traditional Islam' in Britain. See Geaves and Gabriel eds. (2014) *Sufism in Britain* for a fuller account of Sufi movements and the development of neo-traditional Islam in Britain. See also Werbner (2003) for discussion of transnational Sufism and McLoughlin and Khan (2006) for discussion on Sufism in British-Muslim diasporas.

[102] *Mawlid* in itself simply means 'birthday' or 'birthplace' in Arabic, being derived from the root *walada* 'to give birth to', but is now more commonly used with the narrower meaning of the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. Mawlids, in an expanded usage of the term, can also take place regularly as a form of devotional practice.

arrived just as the *'ishā* prayer was about to begin, and sat at the back while this took place before joining the men at the front. Immediately after the prayer, the men began singing songs in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad – many knew these songs by heart, but a small booklet was distributed to those who wanted to follow the Arabic words. After some time, a young boy brought around a tray of dates stuffed with cucumber and a small *finjān* (cup) of Arabian coffee. I later learnt that this was considered a *sunna*, with the movement placing great emphasis on the prophetic traditions, with a particular interest in promoting prophetic sports such as archery and wrestling. Afterwards, a younger man then brought a small vial of *'aṭr,* or Arabian oil-based perfume, which he dabbed onto our wrists. This custom was repeated each time I visited. I noticed that many of the men attending were wearing what appeared to be Pakistani-style dress or other non-Yemeni styles of clothing. Speaking to some of them afterwards, they confirmed that the majority of attendees were not Yemeni, and many were from outside of Liverpool. After the singing, a series of short sermons were given in English – one of which was by the shaykh who spoke on the death of three prominent Shaykhs (or *ḥabā'ib* – the beloved, as they were commonly referred to) from Tarīm. Several sermons then usually followed, focusing on topics such as how these Tarīmī shaykhs can bestow spiritual blessings. In comparison to prayers and sermons at Masjid al-Salām, these *mawlids* felt much more intimate and introspective. On most evenings, there were around twenty to thirty men and a similar or slightly smaller sized group of women. I was also told that although the building was open for the five daily prayers, they did not hold *jum'ah* as they did not want to 'take people away' from the main mosques in the city.

It is striking that a Yemeni-based Sufi Order in Liverpool is attended by a majority of non-Yemenis, but it is also unsurprising that such a movement would flourish in Liverpool given the overall Yemeni landscape. Despite its Yemeni orientation, very few Yemeni participants regularly attended along with a small number of their relatives and acquaintances. Several non-Yemeni attendees also mentioned that they preferred the environment this group provided as other Liverpool mosques could be 'too Yemeni' or relied too heavily on Arabic language. Nonetheless, in conversations with attendees and *shaykhs* afterwards, the importance of Yemen within Islam's history was often mentioned, with several having also studied in Tarīm. As sectarian ambivalence among second-

generation participants has been highlighted, this movement was also discussed in similar terms. That is to say, no participants explicitly self-identified in terms of Bā 'Alawī *ṭarīqa* or as 'Sufis'. The motivations for attending were more clearly expressed in terms of the Islamic and Arabic learning provided by the centre's 'micro-madrasah' for adults and children. Indeed, the overall atmosphere was that of a group of individuals who were particularly motivated to further their knowledge, with many of the attendees being well-educated professionals who had moved to Liverpool from elsewhere. Thus while the Bā 'Alawī presence in Liverpool further strengthens the Liverpool-Yemen connections, adding to the notion of Liverpool as containing 'Yemen in one city', I argue that this particular form of transnational Sufism can be understood as an alternative vision to transnational reformist movements, both of which have little relevance in the majority of the participants' articulations. That is to say, the Bā 'Alawī *ṭarīqa* emphasises 'pure and authentic Islamic instruction' (Knysh, 2001: 407) propagated via transnational networks, but differs significantly from Salafi movements in that it draws legitimacy not only from textual sources, but also from the status of its leaders as *sāda* – direct descendants of the Prophet – and also carriers of mystically illuminated knowledge. In this way, while it shares with Salafism an appeal to 'pure and authentic' Islam, it is neither de-culturated nor de-territorialised. The Bā 'Alawī Order is orientated towards the spiritual centre of Tarīm, its mission is global, with the Liverpool centre being focused towards incorporating prophetic traditions into daily life and increasing one's Islamic learning.

Nonetheless, the relevance of this movement to second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni participants and their construction of Muslim identities is limited given the small number of Liverpool-Yemeni attendees. Although not explicitly stated in interviews (nor was this centre familiar to all participants), the reasons for the broader lack of appeal of this movement among second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis can be understood in terms of the

importance of ethnicity and the family network, as well as pragmatic concerns. As has been seen, several participants have family ties to the smaller, more Yemeni-orientated mosque and prefer to simply attend where their family and friends also attend, as Maḥmūd noted. The location of the Bā 'Alawī centre is also somewhat outside of L8 and not within easy walking distance of many participants' homes, unlike the other mosques of L8.

Nonetheless, this movement can, in some ways, be considered an 'outgrowth' or expansion of translocal/diasporic Islam in that the Yemeni landscape of Islam in Liverpool is now no longer confined to, nor being produced, solely by Liverpool-Yemenis. Its importance for those Yemeni participants who do attend also demonstrates the complex and continuous negotiation of 'roots' and 'routes' in that while the Bā 'Alawī order has not necessarily 'travelled' with Yemeni migrants to Liverpool, its rootedness in Yemen (and Yemen-in-Liverpool) inevitably becomes inscribed with new significance for some Liverpool-Yemenis. In this way, the contingencies and histories which form part of the processes of locality and identity production must be emphasised.

6.7 Ummatic Ambivalence and Muslim Communities of Co-Responsibility

Thus far, this chapter has considered how second-generation participants invoke Yemen and Yemeniness in discussions of Islam and Muslim identities. While the participants' Muslim identities are rooted in and articulated alongside translocal family/ethnic networks, Islam also provides a common ground for the many multi-ethnic friendships and relations which participants enjoy. In this way, I argue that while the participants' Muslim identities are 'ethnicised' in certain contexts, they are also shaped, and themselves shape, the social imaginary of the multi-ethnic locality of Toxteth. As Liverpool's Muslim population has increasingly diversified since the arrival of Yemenis, having seen a relatively large influx

of Somalis, other Arab groups, and a smaller number of South Asian groups, second-generation participants are increasingly in contact with the city's diverse Muslim population. Indeed, Munīra mentions the arrival of Somalis marking a turn to more 'visible' forms of religiosity in Liverpool, such as the wearing of *ḥijāb*. While Islam and (Yemeni) Muslim identities become embedded in multi-ethnic networks and are negotiated in this context, this is not to say that they have become 'de-culturated'. Rather than speaking only of 'Muslim first' identities, Liverpool-Yemenis predominantly discuss Islam and Muslim identities relationally in translocal (Liverpool-Yemen) terms, localised (Toxteth), and, less often, in global terms. Thus, I suggest that constructions of both 'Scouse' and 'Yemeni' identities are equally important in understanding Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities. Additionally, while Islam provides the basis for a multi-ethnic 'community of co-responsibility' for the second generation, the relevance of the notion of the global *umma* in everyday life of participants was met with ambivalence. It is first worth noting that this 'community of co-responsibility' is more clearly being produced and articulated by the second generation whose identities are in many ways shaped by the post-1981 riots (and post-Rushdie Affair) context of multi-ethnic L8 and the emergence of prominent Yemeni leadership in representations of 'community'. Indeed, Aḥmad (30s, born in Liverpool, education sector) noted a perceived 'hierarchy' of priorities among the older generation:

There's a hierarchy of things they'd [the older generation] be interested in, I'm not saying exclusionary, but Yemeni, Arabic, Muslim, so say someone comes to the community for help they'll go 'help him out because he's Yemeni', and then 'ok then, he's Arab help him out', and then 'help out your Muslim brother if you can'. So for me that's the hierarchy if you want *umma* there, it's not saying it's irrelevant it's just saying it's among other things and functions.

Discussions of British-Muslim identities often begin by noting the Rushdie Affair which signalled a move towards 'a political focus on Islam' (Kibria, 2008: 249) and 'a maturation of Muslim identity politics' (McLoughlin, 2002: 44). However, given that the Liverpool-Muslim population was small at the time with Yemeni numbers increasing predominantly after 1990 according to Halliday (1992: 55) and participants' accounts, the Rushdie Affair appears to have had little public reaction in Liverpool.[103] Seddon also notes that in the wake of the Rushdie Affair in South Shields, Yemenis were portrayed 'positively' in comparison to British-Muslims elsewhere:

> The successful integration of the large Muslim minority in South Shields is certainly an optimistic omen at a time when relations between the wider British Muslim community and its host country are at an all-time low (2014: 226, citing Dalrymple, 1989).[104]

The Rushdie Affair's apparent lack of impact in Liverpool (and among British-Yemenis more generally) can also partly be attributed to what Halliday (2010), Searle (2010), and Seddon (2014) note as the 'encapsulation' of earlier generations of British-Yemenis who had little participation in wider society, limited English ability, and due to the precarious nature of migration and their settlement status, did not wish to draw attention to themselves.[105] Second-generation participants frequently noted that their parents' or earlier generations 'kept themselves to themselves'.

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[103] Just as Modood (1990) argues that the Rushdie Affair can equally be located in socio-economic pressures which Bradford Pakistanis were facing, the Toxteth Riots represented a similar phenomenon, albeit in more explicitly racialised terms. Halliday (1992: 55), as previously mentioned, also notes that during the Toxteth riots 'Yemeni shops were largely left alone'.

[104] Seddon notes Dalrymple was writing for *The Independent Magazine* in an article titled 'The Arabs of Tyneside'. Of course, it is debatable to what extent this account represents a 'real' or 'impressionistic' reading of the situation, but nonetheless participants made no mention of the Rushdie Affair nor does Liverpool appear to have experienced the public anger seen in cities with larger Muslim populations.

[105] I.e. migration to Britain was dependent upon being a citizen of Aden as a British Protectorate, but as has been noted, the majority of those who emigrated from Aden were not actually Adeni but from the Central and North regions.

In addition, I argue that the growth in Yemeni numbers in Liverpool/L8 must also be considered in the particular context of the lasting impact of the 1981 riots as discussed in the previous chapter. For Brown (2005: 58), the aftermath of the Toxteth riots led to a contradictory situation in which L8 'became more of an isolate', while at the same time, 'the riots resulted in the proliferation of race relations jobs' (ibid.). After seeing significant demographic change from the 1990s onwards, for second-generation participants Toxteth is reimagined as a multi-ethnic locality in which Muslim communities of co-responsibility are formed. Therefore, it is in this context which second-generation Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities become articulated and performed.

Rīm discusses her (hybridised) Scouse-Muslim identity, noting that the notion of a transnational *umma* holds little relevance for her, instead situationally highlighting her Scouse identity alongside her Muslim identity when describing an aspect of her job raising awareness of various religions and traditions in the city:

> I'd say 'Muslims', but not '*umma*'. I don't speak in them terms. When it comes to it, we sit there and have political debates all the time in the family and the shop, I could write a book. [...] Because I'm a Scouser and a bit of a scally, I get on with them [the non-Muslim people who I work with].

Similarly, Layla (20s, student) herself notes ambivalence regarding 'Muslim first' (a term she used unprompted) identities among Yemeni-Muslim youth, before describing how she is more passionate about Scouse-Muslim identities:

> They'd [Muslim youth in Liverpool] say "I practice" but they wouldn't say "I'm Muslim first", so they're not quite passionate about the *umma* and that. [...] See, I'm more passionate about that [being a Scouse-Muslim]....I feel like because I wear a *ḥijāb* and look Yemeni and have a Scouse accent, people are always interested, it's quite unique, like get up in a *ḥijāb* with a scouse accent, people remember you.

Of course, global concerns are also not entirely absent as Rīm mentioned that although she does not consider her Muslim identity in terms of a transational *umma*, she nonetheless feels solidarity with, for example, Palestinians. While Rīm and Layla were ambivalent in discussing Muslim identities in terms of the *umma*, Munīra (30s, born in Liverpool, various employment and activism) noted that the multi-ethnic Muslim networks which she enjoys make the notion of the *umma* more relevant to her, while also noting that in her experience Yemenis are more ambivalent about using it in such a manner:

> The *umma* is like, that's everyone. The whole Muslim *umma*. Because *I'm part of a mixed circle*, so we do talk in those terms. But with like older Yemenis, they're just the Yemenis and they only really know Yemenis, so it would be the traditional…from the Shāfi'i *maddhab* whether they know it or not.

For Munīra, the *umma* is important in that it situates herself as a fellow Muslim in the multi-ethnic context of Toxeth, also recalling Maryam's articulation of a 'Muslim-first' identity, but it does not necessarily stand for a de-culturated Islam as she has previously noted that her turn to religion instead strengthened her sense of Yemeni identity. She also noted in a previous quote that she would place her Scouse identity before Yemeni. While the family and ethnic ties remain an important aspect of second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis' Muslim identities and religious life, for some participants Islam also provided the basis for a multi-ethnic 'community of co-responsibility'. Amidst ambivalence over a supra-territorial imaginary of the *umma*, this 'community' is enacted in the *local* – various forms of charitable giving, fundraising, caring for local elderly Muslims, talks, lectures, *ifṭār* dinners with guests from diverse backgrounds and cross-ethnic interactions highlighted this.

This exploration of (second-generation) Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities highlights the need to recognise 'multiple articulations of Muslim identity found in translocal space'

(Mandaville, 2001: 2), or, multiple positioned belongings (Brocket, 2020). At times negotiated alongside ethnicity, while at others being enunciated as a 'cosmopolitical consciousness' (McLoughlin, 2010: 228). Among second-generation participants, however, this consciousness notably does not recognise Saudi Arabia as 'leadership of the putative global *umma*'. McLoughlin (ibid.) notes that British-born Pakistani youth 'do not feel "at home" when they visit the Panjab or Kashmir' (also McLoughlin and Kalra, 1999; DeHanas, 2013b), and therefore Islam as a prioritised identity provides a more powerful sense of belonging in the face of 'local deprivation and racist social exclusion' (ibid.) While participants were aware of 'difference' in their visits to Yemen, this sense of 'difference' was not emphasised. DeHanas (2013b: 469) notes that: 'East End second generation youth on short-term visits to Bangladesh tend to undergo a distancing from Bengali belonging' and that 'Mecca is growing increasingly important over Bangladesh as a symbolic source of fulfilment, direction, and belonging' (ibid., 470). In contrast, although second-generation participants often noted that rural, village life in Yemen was at times strange or uncomfortable for them as children, upon reaching adulthood these stays in Yemen were instead articulated as reinforcing Yemeni belonging. For example, Zahra (20s, student) notes:

> We spent most of the time in the village [in Yemen] with my nan, it was brilliant, I loved it. It was strange though, very dusty… my nan, my mum's mum is amazing, everyone knows it's her land [the family estate] and it's amazing because it's a woman in Yemen in her village doing everything. They [my family] wanted to move [back] there actually. There was a third trip which was really bad, one of the worst experiences in my life because a drone went past into the mountains, I didn't hear anything, but I checked the news and a drone did go past. I think of that and then I think now it's getting bombed all the time. But I do feel more connected to Yemenis now…I did like it and I'd love to go back.

Hayfā (30s, of Yemeni and mixed heritage, social work) noted:

I'm not the type of person to live in that village because the amenities aren't that good, and my dad says I don't really know the village because people always come and see you, and you don't get to [go out and] see the village, but when I'm in Yemen I feel at home.

This again points towards the importance of the translocal family and ensuing translocal connections and modes of living among second-generation participants who do not feel wholly distanced from Yemen. Similarly, experiences of racism and exclusion were noted by several participants particularly during childhood, but this was nonetheless de-emphasised as the majority instead highlight their embeddedness in Liverpool, and that all of Scouse, Yemeni, and Muslim creatively combine.

6.8 Conclusion

While living in a globalising age means that diasporas often confront and are negotiated in relation to global concerns which become enacted on a local scale, notions of the transnational/global *umma* do not clearly underpin the majority of participants' articulations of identity. Of course, the very concept of the *umma* has deep roots within Islam meaning it is never entirely eschewed, but here I emphasise that the specific, modern imaginary of a transnational *umma* rooted in revivalist forms of Islam does not take centre stage in Liverpool. I suggest that Islam in this sense, contrasted with Yemen-as-nation as seen in the previous chapter, provides a clearer example of what Werbner (2002a: 252) terms 'communities of co-responsibility' for some second-generation participants. Nonetheless, this 'community' is more often discussed and enacted in localised terms further highlighting that it is the lived experiences in the multi-ethnic locality of L8 which remain salient.

Mandaville (2001: 11) notes that:

> Translocal political space emerges as a particularly rich site of both political identities (i.e. different conceptions of 'the good') *and* politicised identities (i.e. dialogue between these differing conceptions).

With this understanding, Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities can also be read as containing an 'everyday' political/politicised dimension, which should not be confused with 'political Islam'. As Mandaville (ibid., 9) notes 'In this sense 'the political' is not a sharply demarcated sphere of activity unto itself, but rather it describes a mode of interaction – one characterised by the negotiation of identity.' By continually negotiating difference along different scales of reference, (e.g. Muslim vs Non-Muslim, Yemeni vs non-Yemeni, North Yemeni vs South Yemeni, Scouse vs non-Scouse), Liverpool-Yemeni identities take on a political dimension against various antagonisms: most notably the marginal position of Liverpool within Britain, and similarly Yemen in the Arab world.

This chapter has demonstrated that Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities are exemplified by two main sets of concerns. One is translocal and bound up with 'being Yemeni' in that Liverpool-Yemeni-Muslim identities are articulated alongside a '(re)claiming' of Yemen/Yemeniness as a legitimately 'Islamic' against the antagonisms of Saudi Arabia. The other is expressed in terms of a Muslim 'community of co-responsibility' which extends beyond ethnicity becoming incorporated into the multi-ethnic social imaginary of Toxteth. The construction of Muslim identities alongside 'Scouse' and 'Yemeni' also brings into focus the diasporic tension – Muslim identities are at once ethnicised while also providing broader forms of belonging in a way which the ethno-national 'community' cannot. Nonetheless, these Muslim 'communities' become re-localised and re-imagined within the social imaginary and lived experiences of multi-ethnic Toxteth.

Mandaville further notes that:

> The first sense in which translocal space changes the boundaries of Muslim political community is related to the fact that in many of the cases we have dealt with community is constituted not in accordance with ethno-national identity, but rather in terms of one's identification with and, more crucially, rearticulation of a particular set of ethical claims. (2001: 186)

The emphasis participants placed on multi-ethnic Muslim networks and the multi-ethnic character of Islam in Liverpool highlights Mandaville's point that Muslim political communities often transcend ethno-national identities, but I also emphasise that this does not necessarily mean *individual* Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim subjectivities are expressed in de-ethnicised terms. Instead, this chapter has attempted to the reveal the highly contextual and situational nature of these identities – 'Muslim' is not the *only* identity participants hold, and even within the category of 'Muslim identities', Liverpool-Yemenis construct these in relation to a multitude of concerns and experiences.

By tracing the 'travel' of Islam from Yemen to Liverpool and establishing the institutional context of Islam in L8 and beyond, this chapter has explored how second-generation participants construct and articulate everyday Liverpool-Yemeni Muslim identities. Although it has been noted that these contain a political dimension being negotiated in light of various antagonisms, the focus of the chapter has been to explore multiple subjectivities which are constructed in the context of 'translocal living'. It has highlighted that while the various Muslim institutions in Liverpool broadly reflect the religious landscape of Yemen, i.e. as represented by the non-denominationally Sunni mosques of L8, the Yemeni Bā 'Alawī Order, and participants' reports of a smaller number of Salafi-leaning groups, participants' Muslim identities are not solely formed around nor informed by institutional affiliation. Of course, taking an everyday perspective means understanding the role of these institutions from the point of view of the participants, which as has been

seen, is more often than not expressed ambivalently. Instead, ethnicity, locality, gender, language abilities, translocal connections to Yemen, and Yemen's position within the Arab world are all invoked as informing participants' Muslim identities. Significantly, this chapter has argued that Liverpool-Yemenis do not express de-culturated Muslim identities, instead actively connecting their Muslim identities to 'Yemeniness' and 'Scouseness', while at other times participating in and emphasising a multi-ethnic Muslim community of co-responsibility.

Conclusion

This thesis has presented an ethnographic snapshot of contemporary Liverpool-Yemeni life, addressing the overarching research question of 'How do Liverpool-Yemenis negotiate their complex, multiple positioned belongings?'. As the majority of the Liverpool-Yemeni participants are of the 'post-migration' (or 'second') generation, being born and/or raised in the UK, the thesis has revealed emerging generational differences and changing attitudes in constructions and performances of ethnic, national, and religious identity as those born in the diaspora negotiate the tensions between 'roots and routes' (Gilroy, 1993). Generational categorisation has also been problematised in that participants' extended stays in, and strong translocal connections to, Malāḥ and other regions of Yemen make a linear model of progression from the migration of the first generation to the acculturation of the second and further generations less clear.

The current dynamics of Liverpool-Yemeni life also accentuate that diaspora is best viewed as a contingent process. As political mobilisation towards the homeland has decreased in comparison to earlier generations (Halliday, 2010), new forms of engagement and belonging have arisen among the post-migration generation. In many instances, it is the 'everyday multiculturalism' (Werbner, 2013b) of the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of L8 which is prioritised outside of the family network, as seen through various articulations of hybridised Scouse-Yemeni identities and forms of religious and non-religious engagement. Nonetheless, the second generation also maintain strong physical and emotional attachments to Yemen, most clearly visible in the production of a 'hidden' aesthetic diaspora in which the physical experiences of being in Yemen and the presence of the first-generation remain important. This 'aesthetic' Yemeni diaspora is characterised

by events such as the wedding, which was rich in symbolic and material Yemeniness, styles of dress, the decoration and furnishing of homes, the many Arab-themed restaurants and shops of Lodge Lane and the translocal flow of Yemeni goods such as coffee, perfumes, incense, and so on. Nonetheless, it has been seen that this dimension of Liverpool-Yemeni life exists largely within intra-family networks, in a world hidden from the view of institutions and the wider public.

On a broader scale, the contemporary 'community' organisational landscape of Liverpool, while having significant Yemeni input, gives little evidence of specifically Yemen-orientated 'community' building projects. Indeed, the lack of any real Yemeni diasporic public sphere in Liverpool highlights this point. Nonetheless, an everyday perspective has shown that diasporic individuals construct, negotiate, and perform identities according to multiple, contextual orientations which reflect the multifaceted and often ambivalent realities of lived experience. The most salient of these outside of the family network are the local context of multi-ethnic L8 and the role of Islam and Muslim identities in offering alternative forms of belonging. Both 'Yemeniness' and 'Scouseness' have been seen to combine in processes of organic hybridisation, exemplified by the many phrases of participants (such as 'Yemenis are the Scousers of the Arab world'), the importance participants placed on Scouse accents, and the examples of grassroots activism in L8 which highlight the multi-ethnic connections, commitments, and shared experiences of life in this neighbourhood. The notion of 'hybridity' used in this thesis has also emphasised that 'hybridised' identities are not the result of the 'combination' of two or more essentialised identities, but rather reflect Brah's (1996) notion of a 'confluence of narratives' – each 'narrative' itself being located in and produced according to contingent historical contexts and social relations. Indeed, it is not only the intersection of 'Scouse' and 'Yemeni' identities which are involved in these processes as hybridisation can occur

on multiple scales, as seen through the many Yemeni-Somali connections which have produced new hybridised forms of language among Yemeni and Somali youth in L8. A perspective which prioritises the local and the demotic is thus important in gaining a clearer understanding of how everyday diasporic life can involve multiple relations, connections, and experiences not only between minority and majority groups, 'locality' and 'nation', but also those which exist between various minority groups.

Thus while Liverpool-Yemenis have been described throughout the thesis as broadly constituting a 'diaspora' understood in terms of multilocal lives and attachments, a processual understanding also problematises the idea that diasporans and diaspora life can be discussed according to any single 'fixed' identity – ethnic, national, religious or otherwise. For Brubaker (2005) diaspora is, then, best discussed in terms of diasporic 'stances' or 'idioms' rather than as an 'entity'. In this understanding, second-generation Liverpool-Yemenis can be said to have a decreasingly 'diasporic stance' as evidenced by the lack of collective commitment and organisation towards the homeland. Nonetheless, the thesis has also emphasised participants' continued awareness of and attachments to people and places in Yemen as well as a diasporic consciousness which invokes imaginaries of Yemen's past into the present – while these have not resulted in a diasporic public sphere, they are nonetheless an important element of Liverpool-Yemeni life. Thus Brah's (1996) notion of 'diaspora space' has remained important in that it:

> relies on a multi-axial performative notion of power. This idea of power holds that individuals and collectivities are simultaneously positioned in social relations constituted and performed across multiple dimensions of differentiation; that these categories always operate in articulation. (1996: 239)

Thus far I have summarised the overarching conclusion that although post-migration Liverpool-Yemenis do not take part in nor form a 'politico-moral' diaspora centred around the homeland, this is not to say that Yemen and Yemeni identity have no importance. The existence of a rich, embodied aesthetic Yemeni diaspora and the re-claiming and re-imagining of Yemeni identity amidst various antagonisms attests to this. In this way, the thesis has also highlighted that an understanding which views identity as contextual and relational can shed light on the nuances of diasporic life which resist easy generalisation. Rather than assuming Liverpool-Yemenis share a pre-determined, essentialised 'culture' or identity, this thesis has explored the terms with which Liverpool-Yemenis themselves 'make' culture and in which contexts these terms become salient. Baumann's (1999) framework of the multicultural triangle has proved useful in demarcating these various cultural collective identities, all the while noting the interplay of dominant and demotic discourses. A significant contribution of this thesis has also been to show that this framework benefits greatly from the additional dimension of translocality which informs each of these cultural identities in various ways. This is not something considered by Baumann. The addition of a translocal dimension to Baumann's framework also demonstrates that dominant discourses of culture are not only those which are generated by national/local contexts 'here', but that they can also travel from 'there', as was seen in the participants' contestations of Yemeni social hierarchies and divisions.

Chapter 4 revealed that Yemeni identities and performances of Yemeni culture remain an important aspect of Liverpool-Yemeni life. However, these largely take place behind the doors of the (translocal) family network; ethnicised Yemeni identities do not form the basis of any large-scale public engagement or mobilisation. Chapter 5, by telling the 'story' of Yemeni-led community building projects, highlighted how the national contexts

(of both Yemen and the UK), as well as national discourses and agendas have impacted fictions of Yemeni-led 'community' representation in L8. This was contrasted with the demotic, everyday experiences and articulations of the second generation as seen through practices of 'demotic cosmopolitanism' which rests on a shared identity across difference in multi-ethnic L8. Chapter 6 then explored how Islam and Muslim identities are both invoked in reinforcing Yemeni identities against the backdrop of Saudi antagonisms in particular, while also extending beyond ethnic ties for many participants in the multi-ethnic context of L8. Crucially, it has been seen that Liverpool-Yemenis rarely discuss Muslim identities in de-culturated terms, but nonetheless 'everyday' Islam provides a broader ground for imagined communities which transcend, but do not necessarily reject, other cultural identities. While Werbner (2002a) highlights the tensions between the aesthetic South Asian diaspora characterised by 'fun' and 'consumption', and the religious, transnational 'Muslim diaspora' in which Manchester-Pakistanis take part, the Liverpool-Yemeni participants in this study indicated no such conflict. Instead, Yemeni culture and identity are re-claimed as legitimately 'Islamic' in themselves. This was exemplified by participants' discussions regarding an increased knowledge of Islam reinforcing a sense of Yemeniness, and the emphasis placed upon Yemen, as opposed to Saudi Arabia, as an alternative sacred 'centre' of Islam. In this case, the imaginary of Yemen as an alternative 'centre' of Islam has now extended beyond the confines of a single Yemeni ethnic group, being (re)produced by various non-Yemeni Muslims in the city. This shows that diasporic groups can also shape the localities in which they settle rather than simply being shaped by them.

In addition to the empirical contributions of the thesis, which enrich the field of Arab/Muslim diaspora studies and add a further, contemporary dimension to the literature

on British-Yemenis, the theoretical approaches taken in the thesis also demonstrate that an ethnographic study of diaspora benefits from the synthesis of several main theoretical concerns in keeping with the research questions. Given the internally heterogeneous nature of diasporas and an emphasis on *multiple* belongings, no single theory can adequately address the multitude of subjectivities, experiences, attitudes, and everyday modes of being examined in such a study. Instead, I have drawn upon Gilroy's (1993) notion of 'roots and routes' to highlight the diasporic tensions characteristic of the post-migration generation, de Certeau's (1984) conceptualisation of the everyday as an important locus of embodied agency, Bakhtin's (1981) notion of organic hybridisation, Brah's (1996) theorisation of 'diaspora space' which allows for a more processual and relational understanding of diaspora, and Appadurai's (1996) conceptualisation of locality as both being produced by and producing 'local subjects' within specific sets of power relations. In addition, the thesis has also drawn upon the more empirically-driven works of scholars of diaspora such as Werbner (1990, 1996, 2002a, 2011) and McLoughlin (1996, 1998, 2009, 2014). In so doing, this study has notably emphasised that any discussion of 'Muslim diasporas' or 'British-Muslims' must be equally as attentive to the differing contexts, contingencies, and trajectories as to the commonalities. A context- and scale-sensitive approach to the question of multiple belongings can shed light on how everyday subjects utilise (and indeed make) 'culture' in its various forms and the surrounding dominant/demotic discourses to shape their own identities and modes of engagement in the social world. Rather than beginning with assumptions that any of Scouse, Yemeni, or Muslim identities take precedence, the thesis has shown that all of these have importance, albeit in different contexts and often with differing sets of concerns – at times articulated and performed simultaneously, and at others kept separate. While existing studies have employed 'British-Arabs' and 'British-Yemenis' as 'default', broad categories, this thesis

has significantly devolved such notions by limiting the focus to a single, local context. Many of the lived experiences and articulations of the participants can only be understood through a nuanced examination of the local histories and dynamics of Liverpool, L8, and regions within Yemen alongside the broader contexts in which they are embedded. Therefore the thesis also proposes that any discussion of 'British-Arabs' or 'British-Yemenis' must recognise that such broad groupings may hold little analytic value in a study of everyday subjectivities and collective identities within a particular locality.

As any ethnography can only provide a partial and limited snapshot of a particular context and time, this thesis opens up new avenues for future study concerning British-Arabs and/or British-Muslims. Notably, ethnographic studies which focus on the spaces which I was unable to access primarily due to my 'outsider' status or gender would greatly complement this thesis and provide a counterpoint to many of the themes discussed. Additionally, in-depth ethnographic studies of second-generation Yemenis in other UK cities such as Birmingham or Cardiff would allow for a comparative dimension in exploring the significance of locality in Yemenis' constructions and performances of cultural identities, thereby providing a multifaceted perspective of what being Yemeni in everyday, contemporary Britain means. A particularly interesting avenue of exploration is how post-migration Yemenis in other UK cities in which they are not the majority Muslim group construct their identities. Furthermore, despite a strong sense of 'Scouse-Yemeniness' emerging among the post-migration generation, it remains to be seen how the impact of the ongoing crisis in Yemen and the inability to be 'there' will shape Liverpool-Yemeni life for the future generations.

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Appendix 1: Overview of Interview Participants

'Abdullāh
Male. 40-50. Various employment. Arab, non-Yemeni.
Born in an Arab country. Has frequent contact with Yemenis through mosques.

Aḥmad
Male. 30-40. Education sector. Yemeni.
Born in Liverpool.

Dālyā
Female. 30-40. Artist. Arab, non-Yemeni.
Born in Liverpool, has spent time in another Arab country.

Farīda
Female. 30-40. Various employment. White-British revert.
Born in Liverpool. Lived in Yemen for a long period. Has many connections with Liverpool-Yemenis.

Hayfā
Female. 30-40. Social work. Yemeni of mixed heritage.
Born in Liverpool.

Ḥakīm
Male. 50-60. Board member of a mosque. South Asian heritage.
Moved to the UK for education, Liverpool at a later date.

Ḥalīma
Female. 30-40. Various employment. South Asian heritage.
Born in the UK, moved to Liverpool at a later date. Has frequent contact with Yemenis.

Ḥāmid
Male. 50-70. Community leader. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen, educated in Ṣan'ā.

Jane
Female. 40-50. Education sector. White-British.
Born in Liverpool. Has frequent contact with Yemenis as part of her employment.

Karīma
Female. 30-40. Various employment including shop work. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen. Moved to Liverpool as a spouse of a Liverpool-Yemeni.

Layla
Female. 20-30. Student and artist. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen. Moved to L8 at a young age.

Maḥmūd
Male. 40-50. Self-employed. Yemeni.
Born in the North West. Moved to L8 at a young age. Childhood spent in Yemen.

Maryam
Female. 50-60. Involved in mosque activities. Yemeni.
Born outside of Liverpool, spent a long period in Yemen. Moved to Liverpool at a later date.

Munīf
Male. 50-70. Community work. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen, educated in Aden.

Munīra
Female. 30-40. Various employment. Yemeni.
Born in Liverpool.

Nāṣir
Male. 50-70. Community work. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen, educated in Aden.

Qays
Male. 50-70. Community work. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen, educated in Aden.

Rīm
Female. 30-40. Various employment including social work. Yemeni.
Born in Liverpool.

Samīr
Male. 50-70. Community work. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen, educated in Aden.

Sāra
Female. 30-40. Various employment. White-British revert.
Born in Liverpool. Has many connections with Liverpool-Yemenis.

Ṭāriq
Male. 40-50. Various employment including community work. Yemeni.
Born in Merseyside region. Moved to Liverpool at a young age.

'Umar
Male. 50-70. Community work. Yemeni.
Born in Yemen, educated in Ṣan'ā.

Zahra
Female. 20-30. Student. Yemeni.
Born in Liverpool.

Zamīla
Female. 30-40. Various employment including shop work. Yemeni.
Born in Liverpool.

Total number of participants:	**21**
Yemeni:	14
Arab, non-Yemeni:	2
Other Ethnicity:	5
Male:	8
Female:	13

Note: Community leaders have been split into several pseudonyms for greater anonymity. The total number of participants reflects the actual number of individuals who participated in interviews. This thesis has attempted to give space to multiple perspectives and voices, but not all participants have been quoted verbatim.

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Name of Project: *Liverpool-Yemenis: Locality, Diaspora, Transnationalism and Religion in a British-Arab Community*

Invitation to Participate in Research

You are being invited to take part in a research project. It is important for you to fully understand why the research is being done, and what it will involve before you decide whether you would like to participate. Please take time to read the following information carefully. You can discuss this with the researcher David Harrison, who is a current PhD research student at the University of Leeds, or others if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if anything is unclear, or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to participate.

What is the purpose of this research?

As the Liverpool-Yemeni community has a long and vibrant history, but has received little attention, this research hopes to explore and analyse its members' stories, histories, and experiences. Some main topics the research will address are: Liverpool-Yemeni identity, the local community's ongoing relationship with Yemen and with ethnicity and religion, challenges the community faces, inter-community dialogue, and community-based projects.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participate as you are a member of the Liverpool-Yemeni community, and your history, experiences, and/or stories would be valuable to the research.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. If you wish to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form and will be given a copy to keep. If you change your mind before participating, you can inform the lead researcher that you wish to withdraw from the project, and you do not need to give a reason.

What will my participation involve?

Participation will involve an interview with the researcher. Interviews will last approximately one hour. The place and time will be mutually agreed. Questions will be open-ended and will invite you to share stories and experiences relating to the questions. You may refuse to answer any questions or leave the interview at any point without giving a reason.

Will I be audio recorded and who will have access to my responses?

The researcher will want to make an audio recording of the interview using a digital recorder. This is to ensure that your responses are transcribed accurately and it also allows for better quality

analysis. The recordings will only be available to the researcher. Transcriptions of recordings will be available to the researcher and the two research supervisors with your permission. They will be kept in a University password-protected drive which only the researcher has access to. Hand-written notes taken by the researcher during the interview are also a possibility if the participant does not wish to be recorded. The same conditions apply to written notes and any recorded material regarding confidentiality.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

No names (or other identifiable information such as date of birth or addresses) will be used in the outputs of the research. The researcher will assign pseudonyms and individuals will remain anonymous. You will also be requested to give permission for the researcher to use quotes from your interview (see Consent Form). There is a possibility that you might be able to identify yourself from a quote, but no personal names or other identifiable information will be attached to quotes.

Can I withdraw after participating?

Please note that if you have participated and later wish for your data to be withdrawn, you should request this within 3 months of your participation as the data will be anonymised for the analysis and it may be impossible to identify you thereafter. You do not need to give a reason for withdrawing.

During the interview

You are advised that any information you give to the researcher which would result in harm to yourself or others, or involves criminal activity must be reported to the relevant authorities.

Who has ethically reviewed this project?

The University of Leeds Research Ethics Committee have given ethical approval to this project. The project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under the White Rose College of the Arts and Humanities award.

What will happen when the research is complete?

The final results of the research will be compiled into a doctoral thesis. It is hoped that this may then be published as a book or journal article.

Contact details

Researcher:	David Harrison
Email:	ml08deh@leeds.ac.uk
Institute:	University of Leeds, Theology and Religious Studies
Supervisors:	Dr Seán McLoughlin (s.mcloughlin@leeds.ac.uk)
	Dr Jasjit Singh (j.s.singh@leeds.ac.uk)

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Forms

Participant Consent Form

Researcher: David Harrison, University of Leeds, ml08deh@leeds.ac.uk
Supervisors: Dr Seán McLoughlin, Dr Jasjit Singh, University of Leeds

Add your initials to the box if you agree with the statement.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the   research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the   project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any   time without giving any reason. If I do not wish to answer a particular question(s), I   understand that I am free to decline without giving reason.

3. I give permission for the researcher and two research supervisors to have access to my   responses. I understand   that my name or other identifiable information will not be   used   in the thesis or further publication(s).

4. I give permission for quotes from my responses to be used in the thesis or further   publication(s). I understand that I will remain anonymous, but I may be able to identify   myself from a quote.

6. I understand that I can withdraw my responses up to 3 months after the interview has   taken   place. I understand that it may be impossible to withdraw data after this period as   it will be   anonymised.

7. I agree to take part in the above research project and I will inform the researcher if my   contact details change.

To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant:

Interview Number:_____   Name of researcher: David Harrison

Date: _____   Date: _____

Signature: _____   Signature: _____

Appendix 4:   Example Interview Questions

Could you tell me about how you/your family arrived in Liverpool (or the UK) from Yemen?

Which part(s) of Yemen are you/your family from?

Could you tell me about what you/your family did after first arriving from Yemen?

Could you tell me about your experiences growing up in Liverpool?

Could you talk about your relationship to the Arabic language/the Scouse accent?

Could you tell me about your experiences with any of the Arabic or Yemeni community centres in Liverpool?

Could you talk about your relationship to L8, Toxteth, or Lodge Lane if these places are important to you?

How do you feel about the labels Arab/Yemeni? How about Scouse/British?

Is a Scouse identity important to you in any way?

Could you talk about your relationship to or perceptions of non-Yemeni Arabs in the city?

Do you/your family travel to Yemen often? If so, could you say a little about this?

Do you/your family send remittances to Yemen?

Could you talk about whether/how a Muslim identity is important to you?

Could you describe your relationship to or experiences of any of the religious insitutions in Liverpool?

Do you have a preferred mosque? If so, what is this preference based on?

If you had the choice of place to study Islam, where would this be and why?

As the *umma* is increasingly talked about, could you tell me how/if you relate to this concept?

How do you feel about ideologies (such as Wahhabism) which are associated with/promoted by Saudi Arabia? Could you talk about how these might interact or conflict with a Yemeni identity?

How do you feel about the relationship between 'Yemeni culture/ethnicity' and 'Islam'?

What do you think about the future of Yemenis and Yemeni culture in Liverpool?

Appendix 5: Research Poster

Are you Yemeni and live in Liverpool?

David Harrison is a researcher at the University of Leeds where he studied Arabic language.

He is currently undertaking a project on Liverpool-Yemeni life, and is looking for people who would be interested in talking to him.

The project is to explore the history of the Liverpool-Yemeni community, their experiences and opinions on various matters such as Yemen, life in Liverpool, religion and language.

If you would be interested, please contact him on: ml08deh@leeds.ac.uk

You can view his academic profile at: https://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/profile/20042/2049/david_harrison

Thank you

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

White Rose
College of the Arts
& Humanities
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

هل انت يمني وساكن في (أو من) ليفربول؟

ديفيد هاريسون باحث في جامعة ليدز حيث درس اللغة العربية.

هو يقوم الآن بمشروع دراسة عن المجتمع اليمني في ليفربول ويبحث عن أشخاص من المجتمع اليمني للتحدث معه.

هذا المشروع لتوثيق تاريخ المجتمع اليمني في ليفربول وتجاربهم وآراءهم في اليمن, والحياة في ليفربول, والإسلام، واللغة العربية.

اذا كنت تهتم بالمشروع وكنت ترضى أن تتحدث معه، يرجى الاتصال به في الايميل:

ml08deh@leeds.ac.uk

يمكن عرض ملفه الشخصي الأكاديمي في:

https://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/profile/20042/2049/david_harrison

Appendix 6: Ethics Committee Approval

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

David Harrison
Theology and Religious Studies (School of PRHS)
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

**Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds**

06 April 2017

Dear David

Title of study	**Liverpool-Yemenis: Constructions of British-Arab Diaspora Identity and Transnational Islam in a Global Age**
Ethics reference	**PVAR 16-061**

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
PVAR 16-061 Data Management Plan David Harrison.docx	1	14/03/2017
PVAR 16-061 Focus Groups Consent Form.docx	1	14/03/2017
PVAR 16-061 Focus Groups Information Sheet.docx	1	14/03/2017
PVAR 16-061 Interviews Consent Form.docx	1	14/03/2017
PVAR 16-061 Interviews Information Sheet.docx	1	14/03/2017

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation and other documents relating to the study, including any risk assessments. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing

examples of documents to be kept which is available at
http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions
for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Butterworth
Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service
On behalf of Dr Kevin Macnish, Chair, PVAR FREC